Beyond the Legacy

ANNIVERSARY ACQUISITIONS FOR THE FREER GALLERY OF ART AND THE ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY

WHAT IS THE MEASURE OF GREATNESS? IS IT JUST THE VISION WHICH MAKES "SELF-EVIDENT" THOSE SECRETS OF NATURE WHIC

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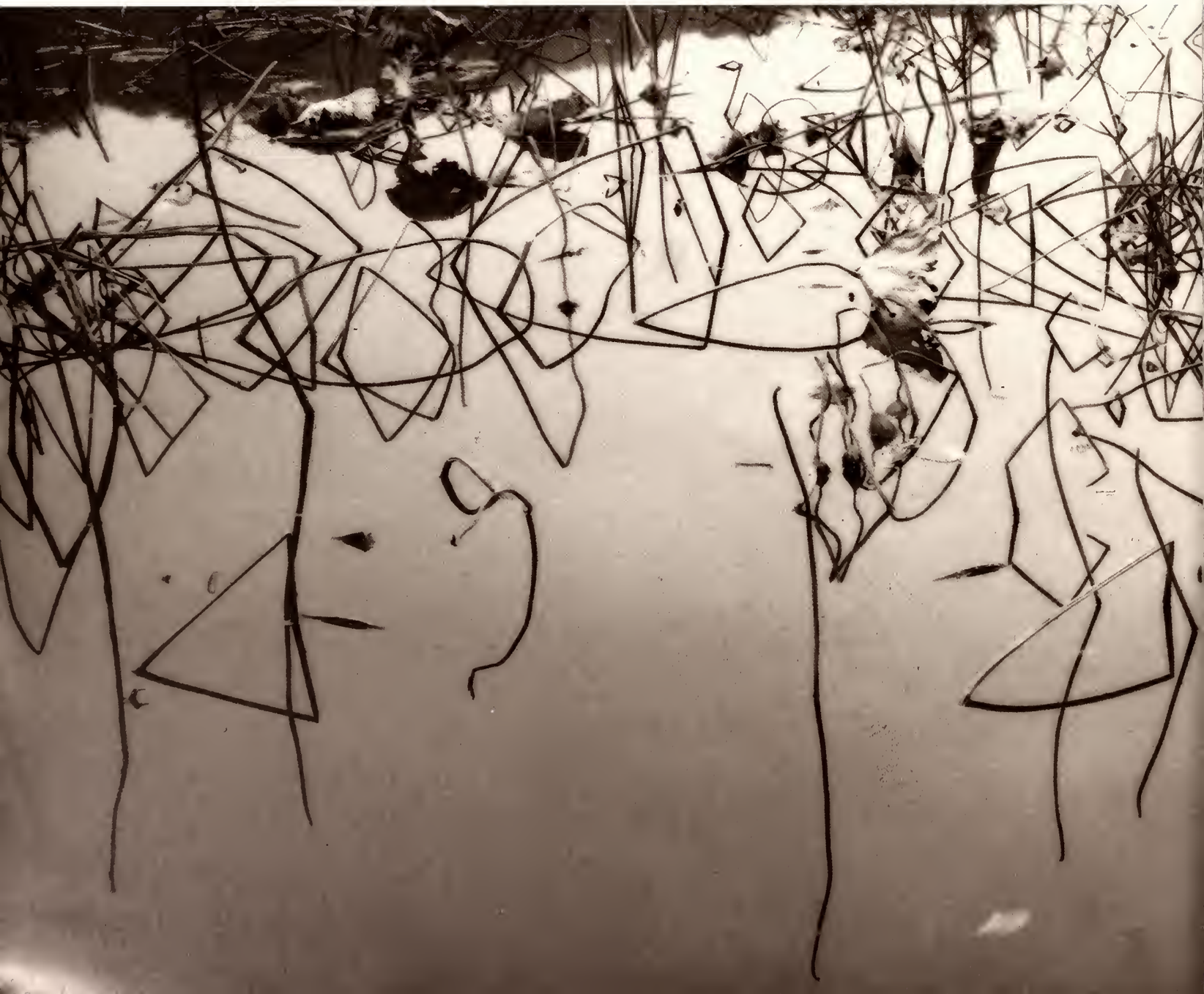
BEYOND THE LEGACY

Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.



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Thomas Lawton *and* Thomas W. Lentz

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Freer Gallery of Art

Charles Lang Freer

Arthur M. Sackler

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Smithsonian
Freer Gallery of Art
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FOREWORD

Together the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery at the Smithsonian Institution form the national museum of Asian art for the United States of America. While the Freer Gallery is celebrating its seventy-fifth anniversary in 1998, one year after the Sackler Gallery completed its first decade, the two galleries — despite their separate histories and ages — are inextricably interrelated physically and programmatically.

The Freer Gallery opened to the public in 1923, a time when few Americans had an interest in (or any experience of) Asia. Such savants as Okakura Kakuzō and Ananda Coomaraswamy had developed an understanding of East Asian and Indian art within an intelligentsia centered on Boston, but Americans in general had neither the opportunity nor the inclination to explore the cultures of Asia — a distant region seemingly unrelated to their lives. If there was a popular perception of Asia, it was perhaps best reflected in the evil eminence of Sax Rohmer's detective story *The Insidious Dr. Fu-Manchu*, published in 1913 and still in print. In that volume, the British establishment faced an adversary described as possessing "all the cruel cunning of an entire Eastern race. . . the yellow peril incarnate in one man." Such clichés reinforced the existing ignorance, of course, but they also made the establishment of the Freer Gallery an especially noteworthy harbinger of extraordinary change in American life and in American attitudes toward Asia.

The Freer Gallery was the first art museum building at the Smithsonian Institution, which has subsequently grown to include sixteen museums and myriad research operations and offices. The Smithsonian receives substantial federal funding, and its collections belong to the people of the United States; it is now recognized as the national museum system for this country. But if the Smithsonian was changing, so was America's relationship to Asia. Over the seventy-five-year period of the Freer's existence, the increasing ease of transportation and communication have made contact with Asian peoples and institutions an inescapable aspect of life in late-twentieth-century America. People of Asian background have become one of the fastest growing and most productive elements of American society, and the history of Asian peoples is now tightly interwoven into the fabric of the nation.

In the 1960s, as an early response to these global developments, the Smithsonian proposed to establish in Washington an architectural complex

Previous page: Detail, Great Mosque, Samarra, Iraq, ca. 1908, silver print, Ernst Herzfeld Papers, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives

and programs that more adequately represented the international community—an idea warmly endorsed by President Lyndon Johnson. Included in the planning that resulted was consideration of ways to overcome severe limitations on the ability of the Freer Gallery to exhibit the artistic traditions of Asian countries. According to the terms of Charles Lang Freer's (1854–1919) gift of superlative objects as well as funds, the Freer Gallery could neither show works from other collections nor lend its objects for display elsewhere. In recognition that loan exhibitions had become an important means for extending public interest in unfamiliar areas of the world, the Smithsonian realized that it must build a second museum for Asian art, one not limited by the terms of the Freer bequest. The result was the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, which opened in 1987 and housed both a distinguished permanent collection initiated by a magnificent gift from Dr. Arthur M. Sackler (1913–1987) and an active program of international loan exhibitions. The Sackler was constructed adjacent to the Freer Gallery, which subsequently closed for renovation and preparation of those public spaces that link the two buildings.

Charles Freer's gift to the United States included works from Asia as well as American paintings, but because he considered his American collection "harmonious" and therefore perfect, he arranged that there could be no acquisitions in this area. Additions could be made to the Asian collection, however, and following Freer's own taste, the Freer Gallery has emphasized the historical traditions of court, temple, and scholarly patrons, especially those of East Asia. By contrast, the initial munificent gift of objects from Arthur M. Sackler held no restrictions, and the Sackler Gallery was encouraged to combine its rich historical collections with more recently recognized fields: contemporary art, prints, folk and village art, craft traditions, and photography. And it was only with the establishment of the Sackler Gallery and the recognition of a need to respond to growing public awareness that departments for Education, Public Affairs, Publications, Design and Installation, and Development were founded. The institution that resulted from the combination of the Freer and the Sackler is so fundamentally different from the Freer when it existed by itself that, despite the seventy-five year history of the Freer, we must consider this new organization as very young. The Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery have been operating together, after all, for only five years. The essays published here and written by Thomas Lawton, former director of both galleries, and Thomas W. Lentz, deputy director,

superbly detail the separate but interrelated histories and directions of the two galleries.

Architecturally and programmatically, each one maintains a distinctive character. The Freer continues to exhibit only works from its own collection in naturally lighted spaces carefully planned by Charles Freer and architecturally unalterable, while the Sackler shows its own collection alongside works from international public and private collections in underground galleries redesigned or adapted for each individual exhibition. Because research is so strong an element of the galleries' identity, exhibitions that present new knowledge take precedence over the general survey and blockbuster. The programs and collections of the two institutions are carefully coordinated by the single staff that serves both, and each gallery complements and enhances the other. The ultimate beneficiary, however, is the American public, whose experience of Asian art is vastly enriched by these interrelated organizations.

With every aspect of our activities — whether exhibitions, research, conservation, education, or public programs — centered on our collections, it is natural that we use the galleries' anniversaries as a way to celebrate new acquisitions, gained through generous donation and occasional purchase. We have also chosen in this publication to emphasize the interrelationship of the collections by intermixing the galleries' acquisitions — creating meaningful conjunctions impossible within their public spaces.

Life at the museum centers on works of art, and we are especially grateful to those private individuals who have so generously expanded the scope of the national collections on this important occasion. Nothing is more rewarding than the enthusiasm of the American public, however. Through their interest we recognize that the artistic traditions of Asia, and the people and cultures that they represent, are moving firmly toward their proper place — the mainstream of American cultural life and discourse at the approach of the new millennium.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing as a single story the different histories of the national museum of Asian art is a difficult task at best. By weaving together the separate but increasingly unified paths followed by the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, which together form this national museum, *Beyond the Legacy* manages to evoke, with an often surprising degree of fidelity, not only the evolution and transformation of this country's perceptions of Asia over the last seventy-five years of what has come to be regarded as the "American century," but also the evolution of the museum and its role. Any effort of this nature and magnitude is inevitably the result of the tireless collaborative work of many people.

In this volume, for example, both Thomas Lawton, former director of the Freer and Sackler Galleries, and Thomas W. Lentz, the current deputy director, have skillfully documented the historical complexities and frequently contentious philosophical issues that have so deeply etched themselves upon the lives and characters of each gallery. Complementing those essays are the individual entries prepared by members of the galleries' research staff: Stephen D. Allee, Joseph Chang, Louise Cort, Vidya Dehejia, Massumeh Farhad, Ann C. Gunter, Mary Shepherd Slusser, Jenny F. So, Jan Stuart, James T. Ulak and Ann Yonemura. Whether considered separately or as a whole, these efforts constitute substantial scholarly contributions to the art historical record, and they are published here to introduce those gifts and purchases honoring the tenth anniversary of the Sackler (in 1997) and the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Freer (in 1998).

A different kind of collaboration has been crucial, too, in recent years, as the roles of the Freer and Sackler Visiting Committees have expanded to embrace a broad range of issues, and we have greatly benefited from the advice and leadership of members of these committees, both past and current. The celebration of the Freer's seventy-fifth anniversary, originally guided by a group of Freer Visiting Committee members including Katharine Graham, Mary Burke, Sherman E. Lee, Willard G. Clark, John Rosenfield and Ann Kinney, was launched with a gift of funds through Mary Burke. It soon became clear that the occasion of the Freer's seventy-fifth, as well as the Sackler's tenth, provided an opportunity to focus on the challenges of coordinating the program of each gallery and to launch efforts to secure the museum's financial future. As always, the guidance and support of central Smithsonian administration are crucial, and we are grateful for the efforts on our behalf of Secretary I. Michael Heyman,

Provost J. Dennis O'Connor, and Ildiko P. DeAngelis of the Office of the General Counsel. Committee members and others close to the galleries contributed significantly to the evolution of a strategic plan, most especially as it touched on development and fund-raising interests — a new area of activity for the Freer and Sackler. As the character of the galleries' future direction became clearer, implementation benefited greatly from the guidance of Anniversaries Committee members Emma C. Bunker, Willard G. Clark, Richard M. Danziger, Robert H. Ellsworth, George J. Fan, Nancy Fessenden, Elizabeth Sackler, and Lily Tanaka, with leadership from the committee chairmen, Cynthia Helms and Ann Kinney, and Honorary Chairman Katharine Graham.

A wide range of gallery supporters, in addition to the Visiting Committee members, have become deeply committed to the galleries' mission and to assisting us in achieving it. The Friends of Asian Arts has experienced tremendous growth, and many members have become involved as active participants and donors. And we have all enjoyed a variety of stellar events in these anniversary years, under Cynthia Helms' direction; they have served to raise the galleries' profile, strengthen the commitment of those already engaged with the galleries, and introduce us to new supporters. That the galleries are today a cohesive, strong, and dynamic institution is in no small measure due to our volunteer leaders.

Central to the anniversaries is this publication, *Beyond the Legacy*, which presents for the first time the gifts and purchases made to honor both the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and the accompanying exhibition at the Freer Gallery of its acquisitions. It is primarily due to the efficiency and dedication of the Publications Department that this book, produced under demanding circumstances, is a reality. As head of the department, Karen Sagstetter responded with characteristic energy and skill to the multiple demands and ever-fluid parameters of an anniversary catalogue; her steady editorial guidance has imparted coherence and grace to a multiauthor effort. Carol Beehler, as always, brought her strong visual sensibility to bear on a wide array of design challenges, creating an elegant volume that will serve the galleries with distinction for years to come. Ann Hofstra Grogg, Kathleen Preciado, and Nancy Eickel's editorial and indexing expertise and Mary-Jen Chen's careful typing ensured accuracy in the final text.

Many other Freer and Sackler staff members also played key roles in bringing to fruition both the catalogue and the exhibition it accompanies.

Bruce Young and Beth Duley of Collections Management capably handled all registrarial matters with typical skill and aplomb, while Scott Thompson of Rights and Reproductions quickly met all requests. John Tsantes, Rob Harrell, and Neil Greentree of the Photography Department worked diligently to supply, often at the last minute, the beautiful photography that enhances this volume. Members of the Department of Conservation and Scientific Research — Paul Jett, John Winter, Stephen Koob, Jane Norman, Martha Smith, Akihiro Kato, Jiro Ueda, and Xiangmei Gu — provided careful and detailed attention to all conservation matters. In the library, Lily Kecskes, Kathryn Phillips and Reiko Yoshimura, as well as Colleen Hennessey in the archives, graciously fielded numerous requests for information or provided expert bibliographic guidance. In the Design Department, Richard Franklin, Karen Sasaki and Richard Skinner brought the exhibition into being with their usual clarity and sophistication, while the talents of graphic designers Nancy Hacskaylo, Rebecca Lepkowski, and Virginia Ibarra-Garza, along with editor Bruce Tapper, handled a multitude of design and editorial tasks for both the exhibition and other anniversary celebrations. Susan Bliss and the Public Affairs Department ensured that crucial information was widely available to the press and public.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Barbara Phillips and her staff in the Office of Development for helping coordinate numerous aspects of this anniversary program with efficiency and great effectiveness. Patrick Sears, associate director, oversaw an endless number of details in his skillful orchestration of the exhibition and related events. Finally, special thanks are due to Elaine Gill, executive secretary to the director, and Marjan Adib, assistant, Office of the Director, for the tireless efforts, superb management, and cheerful energy they brought to virtually every aspect of these anniversary celebrations.

But especially I would like to thank and acknowledge the many donors of works of art and gifts of funds whose names are listed on the following pages. While we were perhaps hesitant at first to ask for birthday gifts, our efforts drew strength from the overwhelmingly generous response. The collections of this national museum are greatly enriched by these works of art, and the programs enhanced by the gifts to exhibitions, the library, conservation, and education programs. These individuals and organizations extend the distinguished tradition of philanthropy initiated by James Smithson's gift to establish the Smithsonian Institution, continued by Charles Lang Freer's gift in 1923 and Dr. Arthur M. Sackler's in 1982.

Charles Lang Freer, a discriminating collector, knew that continuing to collect Asian art would ensure the vitality of his legacy. We continue to honor his foresight in establishing a substantial endowment fund in addition to the gift of his collection, so that the gallery is able, within modest limits, to add to the collection of Asian art on occasion. But we also do not want to overlook the fact that Freer began his quest as a collector of American art, and it was his friendship with the American painter James McNeill Whistler that introduced him to Asian art. Perhaps the most beloved work of art in the Freer Gallery is the Peacock Room, the late-nineteenth-century interior Whistler decorated for his patron F. R. Leyland and which was subsequently purchased by Freer. Although I cannot say that we exactly planned it this way, it is a wonderful twist of fate that we are able to publish Linda Merrill's new book, *The Peacock Room: A Cultural Biography* this fall to coincide with the celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Freer Gallery of Art. In 1990 funds from the Getty Grant program, with further assistance from the James Smithson Society of the Smithsonian Institution and the Mars Foundation, and a research grant from the Kress Foundation, allowed the Peacock Room to be cleaned, revealing much new information that Dr. Merrill has incoporated into her book. We are grateful to the Henry Luce Foundation for a generous grant that made publication of that volume possible. Although we did not know it at the time, that grant was perhaps the first in honor of the seventh-fifth anniversary, and we acknowledge with gratitude not only the foundation's financial support, but its foresight as well in anticipating our anniversary celebrations.

Milo Cleveland Beach
Director

DONORS TO THE ANNIVERSARIES

The galleries are pleased to acknowledge donors of generous gifts and grants in celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Freer Gallery of Art.

Donors of Funds to Anniversary Projects

ENDOWMENTS AND LONG-TERM PROJECTS

The occasion of the anniversaries has given the galleries an opportunity to focus on establishing endowment funds to ensure the future of important initiatives and programs and to launch major multiyear projects that could not be undertaken without significant private support.

GIFTS OF $1,000,000 AND ABOVE

Art Research Foundation
From 1992 to 1996, project grants from the Art Research Foundation in Tokyo, headed by Hirayama Ikuo, supported the conservation of Japanese paintings in the galleries' East Asian Painting Conservation Studio. The success of that collaboration led to the creation of an endowment, the Hirayama Fund, the income from which maintains a Japanese conservation training program at the galleries, strengthening the studio's research and educational capacity.

Katharine Graham
The Education Program Fund supports the galleries' mission of increasing public access to Asian art and culture. This endowment allows the galleries to impart the richness and variety of the collections to a national and international audience by providing income to support a wide range of educational programming.

E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation
In addition to the generous gift that enabled the Freer Gallery to purchase an outstanding group of paintings and calligraphies by Bada Shanren (see F1998.27–.39; F1998.40–.59), grants from the Carpenter Foundation have made it possible for the galleries to initiate two important research and publication projects in Chinese art: a catalogue of the jade collections of the Freer and Sackler by Jenny F. So, curator of ancient Chinese art; and a catalogue of the Song and Yuan dynasty paintings in the Freer Gallery by Joseph Chang, associate curator of Chinese art.

GIFTS OF $500,000 AND ABOVE

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
John Winter, conservation scientist in the Department of Conservation and Scientific Research, is directing a four-year project, "Materials and Structures of East Asian Painting," supported by a major grant from the Mellon Foundation. In this project laboratory methods are used to examine the materials, structures, techniques, and deterioration mechanisms of East Asian painting in order to address longstanding problems in the history and survival of these works of art.

Anonymous
The Chinese Art Research Fund is an endowment, the income from which is designated for research, programs, and projects in Chinese art (excluding acquisitions) at the galleries. Chinese art has historically played a central role at the Freer and Sackler, and the fund helps ensure the continuation of this tradition of scholarship.

Peggy and Richard M. Danziger
The Director's Discretionary Fund provides income that may be allocated by the director to exhibitions and other projects at the Freer and Sackler Galleries. The goal of this fund is to provide all-important seed money at the early stages of a project, allowing innovative ideas to reach their full expression.

GIFTS OF $100,000 AND ABOVE

Mrs. Else Sackler
The Else Sackler Fund is an endowment established during the tenth anniversary year of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, the income from which provides flowers for the Sackler's entrance pavilion. In 1997 a previous gift from Mrs. Sackler, the Public Affairs Endowment Fund, was renamed the Else Sackler Endowment Fund, allowing the galleries to acknowledge her crucial support, which has made it possible for information about the gallery's activities to be widely disseminated in the media.

Sir Joseph Hotung
The library of the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, regarded as one of the world's finest facilities for the study of Asian art and culture, is a vital resource for the scholarly activity that is a hallmark of the galleries. The Sir Joseph Hotung Fund, an endowment fund, provides ongoing income enabling the library to acquire both books and periodicals, primarily on Chinese art.

Nancy Fessenden
A leadership gift from Mrs. Fessenden established the Director's Initiatives Fund for innovative education projects. To date, projects made possible by the fund include a partnership with Fairfax County public schools to develop programs on Chinese history and culture; an artist-in-residence program; and a pilot project to document and preserve the galleries' exhibitions on the Internet.

GIFTS OF $50,000 AND ABOVE

Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert H. Kinney
The Library Endowment Fund, established with a leadership gift from the Kinneys, provides income that supports acquisition of publications in both printed and new electronic formats. This fund provides a reliable source of income to help ensure that the library is able to acquire the variety of books, periodicals, and research materials needed to preserve high standards of quality and comprehensiveness.

Anonymous
This gift of unrestricted funds is allocated to the library primarily for the acquisition of books on Chinese art. Private sources of funding are critical to ensuring the preeminent position of the library, allowing the galleries to maintain and enhance the library's excellent collection and services.

EXHIBITIONS, PUBLICATIONS, AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Projects proposed by the curators in celebration of the anniversaries include those focused on major aspects of the collections, as well as two landmark loan exhibitions. Major gifts ($25,000 and above) from generous individual, foundation, and corporate donors made these projects possible.

Twelve Centuries of Japanese Art from the Imperial Collections
Exhibition (December 14, 1997–March 8, 1998) with catalogue organized by the Imperial Household Agency, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, the Japan Foundation, and the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery
The Henry Luce Foundation
Blanchette Hooker Rockefeller Fund
Japan World Exposition Commemorative Fund

Devi: The Great Goddess
Exhibition (March 28–September 6, 1999) and catalogue
Enron/Enron Oil & Gas International
The Rockefeller Foundation
The Starr Foundation
Hughes Network Systems
ILA Foundation, Chicago
Victoria P. and Roger W. Sant

Worshiping the Ancestors: Commemorative Portraits of the Ming and Qing Dynasties
Research and conservation project culminating in an exhibition and catalogue planned for 2001
Fidelity Investments through the Fidelity Foundation

Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang
Monograph on the great Persian manuscript in the Freer collection, published in 1997
Getty Grant Program

Asia in Museums: New Perspectives
Symposium, October 3, 1998, on the collecting, presentation, and study of Asian art
Ellen Bayard Weedon Foundation

Music Programs and the Bill and Mary Meyer Concert Series
The New York Community Trust–The Island Fund
Elizabeth E. Meyer
The Feinberg Foundation
Anonymous

Individual Donors of Works of Art

Ah Leon
Anonymous
Art and History Trust in honor of Ezzat-Malek Soudavar
The Catherine and Ralph Benkaim Collection
Sylvan Barnet and William Burto
Chow Foundation in memory of Virginia and Edward Chow
Mr. and Mrs. Willard Clark
Lois Conner
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Thomas Lawton

FOUNDING PRINCIPALS

The study of Asian art in the West has an exciting and exotic history. Those individuals who played important roles in making Westerners more aware of Asian art are currently enjoying a degree of deference, their contributions explored in numerous doctoral dissertations. Many of the people who contributed to our understanding of Asian art have, in one way or another, been associated with the Smithsonian Institution and with its two Asian art museums — the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery.

On May 9, 1998, the Freer Gallery celebrated the seventy-fifth anniversary of its public opening, while the Sackler Gallery celebrated the tenth anniversary on September 28, 1997. Charles Lang Freer (1854–1919) and Dr. Arthur M. Sackler (1913–1987), principal donors of the Smithsonian's Asian art museums, made generous bequests, but unfortunately neither lived to see the completion of the gallery that bears his name. Although both provided general guidelines as to how they wanted their museums to be operated, they left to others the decisions on how those expectations should be realized. The story of the people who made the initial judgments regarding the Freer and Sackler galleries and how their decisions determined the character of the two museums constitutes a chapter in America's cultural history.

Freer traveled to Asia by steamship at a time when most Westerners regarded that part of the world as inaccessible. Focusing on newly formulated concepts regarding cross-cultural relationships between East and West, Freer acquired objects reflecting a personal, even idiosyncratic point of view. His concern that the art objects — American and Asian — assembled so carefully retain what he regarded as their integral unity prompted Freer to stipulate that only objects from his collection be displayed in the Freer Gallery. At the same time, he recognized the need for research and provided funds to support scholarly activities.

Sackler made many visits to Asia, where he encountered countries that had been transformed by war and politics during the decades since Freer's last trip in 1910–11. Sackler took advantage of the accessibility of virtually every art collection, public and private, to learn more about the cultures whose antiquities were a central part of his own research. It was an exciting period, particularly because archaeological excavations were providing data enabling specialists to reevaluate long-standing assumptions. Comparisons between East and West were still as viable as they had been

Previous page: Peacock in the Freer Gallery courtyard, 1923. Photograph by Arnold Genthe (1869–1942). Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives.

Fig. 1. Charles Lang Freer (1854–1919), 1916, platinum print. Photograph by Edward Steichen (1879–1973). Charles Lang Freer Papers, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives. Reprinted by permission of Joanna T. Steichen.

earlier, but the depth of understanding reflected a new cultural awareness. Sackler reveled in the exchange of new ideas and determined that his Asian museum and its collections would provide a center for loan exhibitions and international scholarly discussions.

John Ellerton Lodge
First Director of the Freer Gallery of Art, 1920–1942

Much has been written about Charles Lang Freer, his life, travels, and collections (fig. 1).[1] Freer was born into a family of modest means. Following the death of his mother in 1868, he left school at age fourteen and went to work in a cement factory to help support his family. Two years later Freer was a clerk in a general store at Kingston, New York. The offices of the New York, Kingston & Syracuse Railway, of which Colonel Frank J. Hecker was the superintendent, were located in the same building as the general store. Hecker was attracted to Freer's ability and, in April 1873, the nineteen-year-old clerk became paymaster of the railroad. Several years later, Freer went with Hecker to Detroit, where, in 1880, he helped organize the Peninsular Car Works and became assistant treasurer.

In 1900, after effecting the merger of thirteen railroad car manufacturers to form the American Car and Foundry Company, Freer retired from active business at the age of forty-six. For the remainder of his life he devoted most of his time and interest to the study and development of his art collections, which he had begun to assemble in the early 1880s. Like many Americans of the period, Freer began by collecting the prints of European and American artists.

The work of the American expatriate artist James McNeill Whistler had particular appeal to Freer, and he eventually assembled one of the finest collections of Whistler's prints, drawings, and paintings. Although Freer was not fully aware of it when he acquired the Peacock Room in 1904, his commitment to Whistler, his work and his art theories, was to have unexpected ramifications. The artist's elaborately painted interior decoration for the Peacock Room, originally the London dining room of the English shipping magnate Frederick R. Leyland, became the best-known work in Freer's collection.[2] Ultimately, the Peacock Room would occupy a permanent gallery in and become synonymous with Freer's museum in Washington, D.C.

Freer also acquired drawings and paintings by several other American artists, including Thomas Wilmer Dewing, Dwight William

Fig. 2. View of Independence Avenue facade, Freer Gallery of Art, 1924. Charles A. Platt (1861–1933), architect

Fig. 3. John Ellerton Lodge (1876–1942), first director of the Freer Gallery of Art, ca. 1940. Photograph by Arnold Genthe (1869–1942)

Tryon, and Abbott Handerson Thayer. Freer admired the works of these artists because he believed they reflected aesthetic qualities discernible in the art of Asian cultures. Not everyone shared Freer's perceptions, however. Mary Cassatt, the American painter and printmaker who worked in Paris as a member of the impressionist group, said of Freer, "The poor man knows absolutely nothing about pictures."[3]

Freer was an intrepid traveler, and his journeys took him to Europe, West Asia, Egypt, India, Southeast Asia, and East Asia. He studied art collections, met scholars and, most important, acquired objects. In 1906 the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution accepted Freer's gift of his collections. The terms of the deed allowed Freer to retain possession of his collection and add to it during his lifetime. Besides eventually donating more than 9,470 items to the Smithsonian, Freer also provided funds to construct a gallery and establish a generous endowment (fig. 2).

Freer believed that the ideal director for his gallery should have extensive museum experience, a command of East Asian languages, a thorough knowledge of Asian cultures, and, above all, a keen sense of connoisseurship. Freer also knew, only too well, that potential candidates were extremely few. John Ellerton Lodge, however, quickly emerged as a prime candidate (fig. 3): "I have thought earnestly and at great length upon this important question of the Keepership, (or Curatorship), of the collection; — who best can assume that position and maintain the highest standards of administrative, aesthetic, educational and research work. After

careful consideration I feel that you are the person best qualified and equipped to assume this charge; to take care of the collection itself; to further scholarly research; to deepen the appreciation of the objects in the collection as well as the ideals which govern them, and to administer the necessary directive functions in connection with their storage and exhibition."[4]

Lodge's appointment to the first directorship of the Freer Gallery was felicitous, for under less resolute guidance the museum might have developed in a very different direction. His familiarity with government bureaucracy and his experience at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston enabled Lodge to implement Freer's ideas and thwart any attempt to divert income from the Freer bequest.

Freer and Lodge could not have been more different in background and personality. It is remarkable that the two men succeeded in combining their separate abilities to establish the Freer Gallery. Unlike Freer, who left school after the seventh grade, Lodge was born into an aristocratic New England family and received every advantage that money, education, and travel could provide. While Freer retired from active business in 1900, at age forty-six, Lodge did not hold a salaried position until he joined the staff of the Museum of Fine Arts on a temporary appointment in 1911. Lodge was thirty-five years old at the time.

John Ellerton Lodge was the younger son of Henry Cabot Lodge, an influential Republican senator from Massachusetts, and Anna Cabot Mills Lodge.[5] He was born in the Lodge family home, known as East Point, at Nahant, Massachusetts, on August 10, 1876.[6] His parents supervised their children's early education. With his sister Constance and brother George Cabot Lodge, John Ellerton Lodge had ready access to the large family library at Nahant, which was housed in a small wooden porticoed Greek temple, built on the edge of a cliff overlooking the Atlantic Ocean.[7]

After his father was elected to Congress in 1886, Lodge attended Mr. Young's School in Washington, D.C. The Lodges were close friends of the distinguished American historian Henry Adams, who lived on Lafayette Square, across from the White House. Adams's research on medieval art provided another intellectual model for young Lodge. In 1895, when he and his family visited the Gothic cathedrals at Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres, Henry Adams was their guide.[8]

Following in the footsteps of his father and older brother, John Ellerton Lodge entered Harvard College in 1896 but was forced to suspend his studies during his sophomore year because of problems with his vision.

A blood vessel in one eye burst, giving rise to the fear that the young man might lose his sight. Lodge never completed his studies at Harvard. When his eyesight improved, he traveled in Europe, perfecting his knowledge of French and German as well as pursuing his keen interest in music and painting.

Always a serious student of music, Lodge attended the New England Conservatory in 1899–1900.[9] He composed music for choral odes and lyric scenes for a production of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon,* performed in 1907 by the Harvard Greek Department in Harvard Stadium.[10] Lodge's command of Greek made him the best qualified of the Freer Gallery directors to carry out research on the biblical manuscripts in the collection. One of the most famous of those manuscripts is the fourth–fifth-century Gospels, usually referred to as the Washington Manuscript, which Freer acquired in 1906 in Egypt.[11]

From childhood John Ellerton Lodge was familiar with East Asia. His paternal grandfather, after whom he was named, was a Boston merchant whose ships took part in the lucrative China trade.[12] He also benefited from the intellectual guidance of William Sturgis Bigelow, a Harvard classmate of his father.[13] Although trained as a surgeon, the independently wealthy Bigelow preferred to pursue what developed into a lifelong investigation of Asian art and religions. Bigelow went to Japan in 1882 for what was intended to be a brief trip but stayed six years, during which time he became an earnest student of Buddhism. In 1910 Emperor Mutsuhito of Japan awarded Bigelow the Imperial Order of the Rising Sun, Third Class.

Bigelow saw a great deal of Lodge in Boston during the late 1910s. He was sympathetic to the younger man's long search for a career, listened to his occasional outbursts of frustration, and was solicitous of his physical well-being.[14] A trustee and generous patron of the Museum of Fine Arts, Bigelow no doubt played a key role in Lodge's decision to finally take up employment. The museum's offer of a temporary position to Lodge also might have been influenced by the fact that Bigelow was to make a gift to the museum of more than twenty-six thousand East Asian objects.[15] On May 4, 1911, Lodge joined the staff of the Museum of Fine Arts on a three-month appointment, as assistant to Okakura Kakuzō, charismatic curator of the Department of Chinese and Japanese Art.[16] Up to that time, Lodge had no formal training in Asian art.

When Lodge took up his appointment, Okakura was in the midst of cataloguing the several thousand Chinese and Japanese paintings in the

Fenollosa-Weld collection.[17] The paintings had been acquired by Ernest Francisco Fenollosa during his years of residence in Japan (1878–90).[18] Fenollosa, Okakura's predecessor at the museum, later sold the paintings to Dr. Charles Goddard Weld, a Boston medical doctor. When Fenollosa was appointed curator of the Asian collections in Boston, he was the first museum appointee to hold such a title in the United States. An eloquent advocate of Asian art, Fenollosa was helpful to Charles Freer in authenticating his Chinese and Japanese paintings. Lodge took full advantage of the opportunity to learn from Okakura, one of the foremost Japanese connoisseurs of the period.[19] By August 3, 1911, at the end of his appointment, Lodge had made so favorable an impression on his colleagues that he was named associate in charge of paintings and exhibitions in the Department of Chinese and Japanese Art.[20]

The second momentous decision made by Lodge in 1911 was to marry Mary Catherine Connolly of Nova Scotia. On the marriage certificate Lodge gave his occupation as musician, which may indicate his own perception of music as the major focus of his interests even in this the pivotal year of his life. Lodge might also have been displaying his wry sense of humor.

In the months following his appointment at the Museum of Fine Arts, Lodge was responsible for planning a storage and study facility for East Asian paintings. He also documented all available information on the collection. Late in 1912, when Okakura returned to Boston after an extended trip to East Asia, Lodge was asked to assume some departmental duties. Okakura was too busy and impatient to spend the time and effort required to cope with bureaucratic detail. Lodge, however, performed those tasks extremely well. After the death of Okakura Kakuzō in September 1913, Lodge took on the duties of acting curator, a title he held for more than two years, until his appointment to full curator in January 1916. Lodge expressed his debt to Okakura when he joined Bigelow in writing a memorial statement for the *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts*.[21] The methods implemented by Okakura in Boston influenced Lodge when he organized the collections at the Freer Gallery. Lodge's colleagues in the department were Tomita Kojirō, who had joined the museum staff in 1907, and the Indian specialist Ananda Coomaraswamy, who in 1917 was appointed keeper of Indian and Islamic art (fig. 4).[22] By 1913, with departmental routine demanding less time, Lodge was able to concentrate on the study of East Asian languages. Working with private tutors, Lodge soon acquired a knowledge of Chinese and Japanese.

Fig. 4. Tomita Kojirō (1860–1929), left, John Ellerton Lodge, second, and Ananda Coomaraswamy (1877–1947), right, at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, early 1920s. Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Fig. 5. Richard Rathbun (1852–1918), acting secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, center, presides over the groundbreaking of the Freer Gallery of Art, September 23, 1916. Smithsonian Institution Archives

Charles Lang Freer first met John Ellerton Lodge in January 1916, when Freer visited the Museum of Fine Arts to see recent East Asian acquisitions.[23] Evidently the visit was a success. At least Freer and Lodge, both of whom invariably maintained strict formality in their relationships with colleagues, were favorably impressed with one another. Freer expressed his high regard for Lodge to Agnes E. Meyer, a close friend and student of Chinese art, who, with her husband Eugene Meyer, advised Freer in the establishment of his museum.[24] In 1917 Mr. and Mrs. Meyer gave Freer a Chinese stone sculpture purchased from Dikran G. Kelekian, an art dealer with a shop at 709 Fifth Avenue in New York. The Chinese sculpture had formerly been in the collection of Parisian fashion designer Paul Poiret, who counted among his professional triumphs costume designs for Sarah Bernhardt. Poiret is said to have been so captivated by the gracefulness of this Chinese sculpture that he tried to recreate its flowing drapery in his designs. In accepting the gift, Freer proposed to the Meyers that the sculpture be placed in storage until his museum opened, since he believed no one except Lodge was capable of properly installing such an important work.[25]

Construction of Freer's museum in Washington began with the groundbreaking on September 23, 1916 (fig. 5). Acting Secretary Richard Rathbun read a brief address and then turned the first spadeful of earth. As work on the building progressed, Secretary of the Smithsonian Charles Doolittle Walcott urged Freer to name a director. Freer invited Lodge to

meet him in New York to discuss the matter. In response to questions from Freer, Lodge listed the qualifications required of the director of the new museum. Perhaps unconsciously, Lodge was describing himself. In his view, the director should be "a man with an enlightened mind," with "good knowledge of French, German, English, and either Chinese or Japanese," and "at least two years' experience." Lodge also made it clear that he believed authority over purchases, installations, and staff appointments should be vested in the director.[26] The major problem to be resolved, if Lodge were named director of the gallery, was his future relationship with the Boston museum. Freer contacted the president and board of directors of the Museum of Fine Arts to ask for their reaction.

The response of the Boston trustees was not to release Lodge from his position in the museum but to grant him a leave of absence for such time as he might deem necessary to organize the Freer collections and to act as its curator. In his letter informing Freer of that decision, Lodge stated that he anticipated assuming full responsibility for the administration of the Asian collections in both the Boston museum and the Freer Gallery. Since his assistant would be in Asia during the coming summer and autumn, Lodge went on to say that he would not be able to begin his duties in Washington for approximately six months.

Fig. 6. Katharine Rhoades (1885–1965), 1916. Photograph by Alfred Stieglitz (1864–1946). Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives

Freer was not pleased with the Boston trustees' characterization of Lodge's proposed Freer directorship as a responsibility that could be discharged in a mere "leave of absence." Nor was he pleased with the casualness with which Lodge referred to his inability to take up any duties at the Freer for six months. For the moment, however, there was to be no resolution of the impasse. Freer became too ill to pursue the matter further, and when he died, on September 25, 1919, the position of director remained unfilled.

Under the terms of Freer's will, Katharine Nash Rhoades, his secretary, who had assumed increasingly greater responsibilities for decisions as Freer's health declined, was nominated to represent him in all matters relating to the new museum. Miss Rhoades had graduated from the Brearley School in New York in 1904 and subsequently studied painting for several years before making her first trip to Paris. On her return to the United States, Rhoades met Alfred Stieglitz, the well-known photographer and founder of the New York gallery 291, where the work of modernist American and European artists was exhibited.[27] Stieglitz's photograph of Katharine Rhoades, taken in 1916, captures the grace and elegance that appealed so strongly to Freer (fig. 6).

Fig. 7. Agnes E. Meyer (1887–1970), ca. 1925. Photograph by Edward Steichen (1879–1973). Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives. Reprinted by permission of Joanna T. Steichen.

The burden of the critical decision about a director rested with Katharine Rhoades, and she turned to Agnes Meyer (fig. 7), who strongly urged that Lodge be hired because, simply put, he was the best trained person available.[28] Mrs. Meyer talked with Lodge's father, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, pointing out how proud he would be if his son were to become head of the Freer Gallery. Senator Lodge had been a trustee of the Smithsonian since 1890 and was familiar with Freer and his gallery. After Freer's death in 1919, it was Senator Lodge, in his role as trustee, who wrote the memorial statement for the Smithsonian's *Annual Report*.[29]

Even though John Ellerton Lodge continued to put off any definite decision, he was fully aware of the efforts being made on his behalf. During the negotiations he wrote to Katharine Rhoades: "I have received from my father and my sister words of felicitation on my appointment as [director] of the Freer [Gallery]; and am expecting the appointment itself from Dr. Walcott in the next mail. . . . There is . . . a suggestion of the 'will-to-acquire' which I am inclined to attribute to Mrs. Meyer. I feel as if I had been collected, labeled, and put on exhibition."[30]

Finally, on December 20, 1920, Secretary Walcott wrote to Lodge appointing him director of the Freer Gallery with an annual salary of eight thousand dollars. Under the terms of the appointment, Lodge could continue as curator of Chinese and Japanese art at the Museum of Fine Arts. This dual appointment was to provoke considerable controversy in the years to come. A distinguished paleontologist specializing in pre-Cambrian fossils, Secretary Walcott had worked with scientists for most of his life. Nothing in his experience had prepared him for the abstract terms used by Freer to guide the director of his gallery. Finally, in 1923, Walcott called on Lodge to interpret the meaning of two phrases — "for the encouragement of the study of the civilization of the Far East" and "for the promotion of high ideals of beauty" — that describe the director's duties in the letter of appointment. In explicating the terms, Lodge took advantage of the opportunity to express his own concept of what the gallery should be.

> By the phrase "for the encouragement of the study of the civilization of the Far East," I believe Mr. Freer included in his thought, all work which would contribute to the intelligent interest in and knowledge and understanding of that civilization. He looked forward to a time when the gallery would send expeditions to the Far East for cultural and archaeological study and for the acquisition of such available high grade objects as might be deemed desirable to add to the collec-

Fig. 8. Grace Dunham Guest (1872–1964), ca. 1940. Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives

tions now installed in the Freer Gallery of Art. He saw also the need for research work to be carried on at the gallery and elsewhere by staff members or others invited by the [Director] to participate in such work, and the subsequent bringing together in publication or lecture form of such significant material as might be gathered through any of the above named activities. He was most anxious that the gallery should develop into a vital study-plant and not exist only as a place in which art objects might be preserved and exhibited.

The phrase "for the promotion of high ideals of beauty," is a more difficult one to interpret because of its flexibility and vagueness. . . . I believe that to Mr. Freer it meant the necessity for maintaining certain standards of belief, of judgment, and of conduct through which he might be made aware of the real quality of what the term "beauty" meant to him. . . . In the work undertaken for him he demanded orderliness, accuracy, comprehensiveness. In connection with the Freer Gallery he would have applied those same qualities, . . . whether it were the inscribing of an office record or the publication of an important document. In other words, no one part of the work could, in his belief, promote high ideals, unless the same quality of endeavor was carried throughout the various departments and activities of the organization.[31]

Although Lodge was appointed director of the Freer Gallery in December 1920, his responsibilities at the Museum of Fine Arts required that he remain in Boston for several months. Katharine Rhoades supervised many early activities of the gallery, including the monumental task of packing and transferring the collection from Freer's home in Detroit to Washington. She inundated Lodge with letters and telegrams relating to every aspect of the new museum. With great patience Lodge advised her on the lighting, wall colors, and labels for the galleries; on the installation of cabinets in the storage areas; and in registrarial procedures. No detail was too minor for his attention. Lodge responded to questions about such minutiae as the location of accession numbers on registration cards and the color to be used when writing accession numbers on objects. Explaining his choice of a paint color for the galleries, Lodge wrote, "It is not intended to be invigorating; in my view, the stimulus is supposed to come from the works of art. . . . The background is intended to show the works of art for what they are, neither more nor less."[32]

Fig. 9. Carl Whiting Bishop (1881–1942), ca. 1930. Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives

Obviously a staff had to be ready to carry out the day-to-day activities of the gallery. Lodge hired Grace Dunham Guest, who had worked with Freer's collection in Detroit (fig. 8). Grace Guest served as assistant curator from 1921 until 1938, when she was named assistant director, a post she held until she retired in 1946. Lodge depended on her to handle many routine museum activities. Expressing his high regard for her reliability, Lodge declared, with characteristic irreverence, "a mighty fortress is our Grace."[33]

Carl Whiting Bishop joined the staff as associate curator in 1922 (fig. 9). Bishop was born in Tokyo, where his father served as a missionary. Except for twelve months in 1889–90, when his family returned to the United States on leave, the boy spent his first sixteen years in Japan. Bishop attended DePauw University and Hampton-Sydney College and in 1913 received his master's degree from Columbia University, where he studied with noted anthropologist Franz Boas. That same year Bishop embarked on his first scientific appointment as a member of the Peabody Museum Expedition to Central America. For the next three years (1914–17) Bishop was assistant curator of Asian art at the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia. While on an expedition sponsored by the museum in 1915–17 Bishop made his first trip to China. With the outbreak of World War I, Bishop enlisted in the United States Navy and served in China from 1918 through 1920.

From the outset, Bishop's position at the gallery was uncertain. Secretary Walcott was anxious to find someone who could be trained as Lodge's successor, and, at Walcott's request, Lodge interviewed Bishop in New York in January 1922. Whatever Lodge's intentions, his comments to Walcott about Bishop were curiously tempered: "It is, perhaps, a minor point in regard to him that he is physically unimpressive. On the whole, however, I am quite clear in my own mind that Mr. Bishop is the best man available: I really have a genuine admiration for his point of view and his achievement."[34] Early in February, Bishop visited the Freer Gallery and met Secretary Walcott, who must have been bewildered by what he had heard from Lodge about the physical aspects of the man who might one day become director of the gallery. Walcott conveyed his own reactions to Lodge, stressing qualities other than Bishop's physical appearance.[35]

Bishop's appointment as associate curator took effect on April 10, 1922, at an annual salary of five thousand dollars. True to the goal, which was soon to be expounded, of sending "expeditions to the Far East for cultural and archaeological study," Lodge and Bishop immediately began

Fig. 10. Zhou dynasty bronzes unearthed at Xinzheng, displayed in the *yamen* (official government office) in Zhengzhou, Henan Province, in 1923. Photograph by Carl Whiting Bishop. Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives

planning an expedition to China, sponsored by the Freer Gallery and Boston Museum of Fine Arts. The first expedition lasted from February 20, 1923, to August 6, 1927.[36] In Lodge's view, the main purpose of the expedition was for Bishop to arrange an agreement with a Chinese scientific organization for collaborative activities sanctioned by the Chinese government. Lodge placed considerably less emphasis, at the outset, on acquiring collections or conducting fieldwork. Unfortunately, the tenuous political situation in China made it very difficult for Bishop to find a stable government agency capable of considering his overtures. Moreover, the strong nationalist current in China precluded any suggestion of a joint venture. By the time Bishop gained recognition from an appropriate organization, it would either be disbanded or run by a different person, thereby prohibiting Bishop and his colleagues from establishing scholarly protocols.

Shortly after Bishop arrived in China in 1923, he learned of exciting accidental archaeological finds made earlier that summer at Xinzheng, near Zhengzhou, Henan Province. The bronze vessels from the sixth-century B.C. site had been taken to the *yamen*, or official headquarters, of the Chinese general who commanded the region for Marshal Wu Peifu, one of the warlords who controlled northern China. Bishop went immediately to Xinzheng to investigate the site. He offered to assist the Chinese in completing the excavation, which had been so badly conducted that many bronzes were damaged and most gold-leaf decoration had been stripped off

and stolen. Bishop's offer was politely refused. Even his request to photograph the bronzes stored in the *yamen* was initially received with caution. The officer in charge feared that the granting of such permission might be misinterpreted by the Chinese public as preliminary to the surreptitious selling of the bronzes. As it turned out, that eventuality did arise several years later. In December 1926 Bishop learned that Marshal Wu Peifu intended to sell the Xinzheng bronzes as a means of replenishing his war chest. Bishop cabled Lodge, who was familiar with the Xinzheng bronzes from Bishop's photographs (fig. 10). Lodge, however, realized that the Freer Gallery's long-term plans for joint archaeological excavations in China made such a purchase impossible.[37]

From the outset of his efforts in China in 1923, Bishop was assisted by K. Z. Tung, with whom he had worked while at the University of Pennsylvania. In June 1925 Li Ji, a young anthropologist trained at the prestigious Qinghua University in Beijing, who had recently received his doctoral degree from Harvard University, joined Bishop as a field assistant. Frustrated by his inability to secure definite approval from the Chinese government, Bishop returned to the United States to await a more favorable political climate to carry out archaeological work.

During the winter of 1928–29 Tung and Li, on behalf of the Freer Gallery, engaged in protracted negotiations with the National Research Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, regarding collaborative work on the important Shang dynasty site at Anyang in Henan Province. For two seasons, during the spring and fall of 1929, Tung and Li, as members of the field staff of the Freer Gallery of Art, took part in preliminary work at the Anyang site with the Academia Sinica.[38] Heartened by the success of Tung and Li, Bishop returned to China at the beginning of January 1930. Bishop was quickly disappointed, however. Antiforeign sentiment in China was even more virulent than before, and further negotiations with government officials proved unsuccessful. A major setback occurred on June 30, 1930, when Li resigned from the Freer Gallery field staff, confiding to Bishop that he could no longer bear the taunts directed at him by Chinese associates, who accused him of being "in the pay of a foreign government." Almost immediately, Li accepted a position with the Academia Sinica, an institution for which he served with distinction until the end of his life.

With Lodge's blessing, Bishop continued to survey archaeological work in China from November 16, 1929, to April 11, 1934. During that

period — marked by a series of frustrating setbacks — Bishop was supported by funds from the Freer Gallery. In retrospect, the turbulence in China during those years made it inevitable that Bishop would fail. Perhaps the most lasting aspect of the Freer China expedition was the opportunity for Bishop and Li to work together and for the gallery to play a minor role at the initial stage of the historic excavations at Anyang. It was the last expedition sponsored by the Freer Gallery.

In 1924 Archibald Gibson Wenley approached Lodge in regard to a position as librarian at the gallery. Lodge was impressed by the young man and asked whether he was interested in Chinese art. When Wenley responded, "I don't know anything about it," Lodge told him, "That is the best qualification you could have. Everyone I've talked to presumes to know everything about Chinese art." Wenley agreed to follow a training program devised by Lodge, which proved to be long and arduous. For seven years he studied the language, history, art, and culture of China and Japan in Beijing, Paris, and Kyoto. When he had completed Lodge's prescribed regime and formally joined the Freer staff in 1931, Wenley embodied the scholar-specialist whom Lodge believed essential for serious research on Asian art.

Much to the annoyance of Smithsonian officials, Lodge took his time in preparing the galleries for the public opening.[39] In the years 1921–22 curious visitors, regardless of their importance, were uniformly turned away.[40] Tours of the Peacock Room, which had taken place before his appointment, were also suspended. Regarding this matter, Lodge wrote, "I confess to a stingy feeling that the Museum should be kept inviolate until, so to speak, it reaches the age of consent."[41]

Secretary Walcott wrote to Lodge asking for his thoughts on the kind of formal opening he felt Freer would have liked for the gallery. The secretary certainly was not prepared for Lodge's reply: "It seems to me, as I know Mr. Freer's dislike for publicity and for what he termed public 'jamborees,' and his respect for quiet and simple procedure in all things, that it would be more nearly consonant with his feelings, and not undignified, to open the front doors of this building quite simply and silently at the regular opening hour, on whatever day the installation of the collection shall have been completed."[42]

Dismissing Lodge's suggestion for a low-keyed opening, Secretary Walcott planned the inauguration of the Freer Gallery with all the pomp and ceremony appropriate to a new building of the Smithsonian

Institution. Representatives of the press previewed the building and collection on the morning of May 1, 1923. At three o'clock that same day, members of the establishment and regents of the Smithsonian had their private viewing. President Warren G. Harding and Mrs. Harding as well as Vice President Calvin Coolidge attended the event. Members of the cabinet and justices of the Supreme Court also were among the august group.

Invitations were sent to thirty-three hundred people for the seven days of receptions that began on May 2, when Secretary Walcott and his wife were the first guests to enter the gallery at nine o'clock in the morning. Museum directors, collectors, patrons, and critics were among the 373 people who viewed the Freer Gallery that day. Architect Charles A. Platt also came to see his new building. Finally, on May 9, the general public had its first glimpse of the museum. No report of the elaborate inaugural ceremonies refers to the director having made any formal or informal remarks. Lodge was determined to let the building and the collection speak for themselves.

In organizing the inaugural exhibition, Lodge chose objects of primary importance while keeping secondary pieces in storage. Among the Chinese paintings — considered the glory of the Freer bequest — Lodge selected only those works that he believed could legitimately lay claim to the period they represented — a rigorous distinction criticized by some contemporaries.[43] Even with such narrowly defined parameters, Lodge was able to present some extraordinary paintings. He displayed the *Nymph of the Luo River* handscroll, traditionally attributed to Gu Kaizhi (active ca. 344–406), as the work of a Song dynasty copyist, a designation accepted by later authorities. Similarly, the long handscroll attributed to Ma Yuan (ca. 1160–1225) and highly prized by Freer was correctly described by Lodge as a sixteenth-century Ming dynasty copy.[44] Among the Japanese paintings, Lodge selected *Waves of Matsushima* by Sōtatsu (active ca. 1614–39). These seventeenth-century screens remain among the most highly regarded in the Freer collection.

Dominating the Chinese sculpture gallery were two sixth-century Northern Qi dynasty Buddhist limestone reliefs, the first additions to the collection after Freer's death (fig. 11).[45] Lodge had seen the reliefs in New York, where they were offered by C. T. Loo, and he acquired them for forty thousand dollars. The reliefs were set into the wall of Gallery 17, where they have been displayed ever since. The outstanding quality of the objects Lodge acquired for the gallery during those early years set a standard for

Fig. 11. *Western Paradise of the Amitābha Buddha*, China, Hebei Province, Xiangtangshan, Northern Qi dynasty (550–77), stone, height 120, length 338.6 cm. Freer Gallery of Art — Purchase, F21.2

the future. He invariably sought objects considered "the best of their kind," and that phrase became a watchword among East Asian collectors and dealers. At the time it was accepted that to see the finest examples of a particular type, one should visit the Freer Gallery, and art dealers invariably gave Lodge first choice when they obtained objects of outstanding quality.[46]

Lodge's early years as director of the Freer Gallery were troubled by differences of opinion with the secretary of the Smithsonian regarding museum policies. Those disagreements included decisions regarding the display of the collection, the amount of time spent by Lodge in Washington, and the expenditure of income from the Freer bequest. In his will Freer had stipulated that no additions were to be made to his collection of American art, while he specifically entertained the possibility of adding to his Asian holdings. As acquisitions were made, the balance between the original number of American and Asian works of art in the Freer collection was affected. Moreover, Lodge made changes in the galleries, returning some American paintings to storage and planning new installations. Such modifications attracted the attention of those who closely followed the activities of the gallery, and they voiced their concerns to Secretary Walcott. In October 1925 the secretary wrote to Lodge charging him with violating Freer's wishes by removing several American paintings from display. Walcott requested that Lodge "promptly issue instructions to have the paintings returned to the galleries." Several days later, Lodge responded to Walcott's letter, explaining the reasons for his decision: "While I freely admit that a strict construction of the documents in this case may be thought to lead to the conclusion you have reached, I am none the less hopeful that the liberal construction I am advocating may, in the end, appeal to you more strongly. I realize, however, that adverse criticisms of the present exhibition in the four Galleries under discussion may readily,

and perhaps quite properly, impress you more than they impress me."[47] The American paintings were not returned to exhibition. With both patience and an appeal to logic, Lodge had established the authority of the director of the Freer Gallery to change objects on display. In present-day parlance, one might describe this achievement as a defining moment in the history of the museum.

More problems were brewing, however, and they surfaced the following summer when Lodge requested a four-month leave-of-absence to be spent at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Secretary Walcott was concerned because Lodge was away from Washington for relatively long periods of time. The Smithsonian's view, not an unreasonable one, was that Lodge should make a final decision as to which museum he wished to direct.

After discussing the matter at length with Secretary Walcott, Lodge made it clear that he intended to spend several months each year in Boston doing research on the collections in the Museum of Fine Arts. He believed it possible to continue to oversee both collections and pursue research on individual objects. Moreover, Lodge's strong ties with the Boston collection made him reluctant to sever that relationship. Secretary Walcott took the matter to the Permanent Committee of the Smithsonian Institution. In a letter to Lodge, Walcott explained that the committee concluded it was not in the interest of the Freer Gallery that he should continue as director. The committee had determined, therefore, that Lodge should leave his post within the fiscal year.[48]

Obviously matters had reached a crisis: either Secretary Walcott or Lodge must yield. Another meeting between the secretary, the committee, and Lodge failed to resolve the major differences of opinion. Lodge submitted his resignation to take effect on June 30, 1927. When Lodge wrote to Walcott acknowledging the decision of the Permanent Committee of the Smithsonian, he set forth his own opinion about what the Freer Gallery could be and his view of the directorship. As an eloquent, informed statement of the status of East Asian studies in the United States at the time, the letter has special significance. It also provides a rare instance in which Lodge speaks directly about himself. He describes the Freer's Asian holdings as, "on the whole, second only to the collection of the Boston Museum; in one or two respects, it is second to none; and if it be administered in such a way as to develop to their full extent the reasonable implications of Mr. Freer's foundation, it must in due course become the finest thing of its

kind in the world." He then stresses the difficulty in finding someone to succeed him in guiding the collections:

> Nobody is more thoroughly or hopefully aware than I how comparatively easy it will be to produce, in the course of time, a man far better fitted than I for the position I now hold, both here and in the Boston Museum; but it does so happen that I was the first American to take up seriously this particular branch of museum work and that, so far as I know, I am the only one who has done so as yet. To educate another American, even to my degree of experience and competence in museum technique and in the language and cultures of the Near and Far East, will necessarily take a moderate amount of time, effort, and money.[49]

Equally important are Lodge's comments about the policy guiding him in adding to the Freer collection. He emphasizes that "purchases have all been made with a view, first, to securing for the gallery the finest possible examples of the types acquired and, second, to strengthening the collection in its weaker branches. . . . Our series of Chinese stone sculptures must now be considered as among the three or four important collections of the sort in this country and Europe; our group of Chinese ceremonial vessels is today unsurpassed in quality anywhere; and our collection of Persian pottery has become one which must be seen by every serious student in this field."[50]

Whatever the differences separating Secretary Walcott and Lodge, there remained the unalterable fact that Lodge was the best-educated and best-trained American scholar available to direct the Freer Gallery. In marshaling Lodge's defense, Katharine Rhoades wrote to influential friends and to those regents of the Smithsonian who were members of Congress. Eugene Meyer decided to resolve the stalemate. Meyer spoke with William Howard Taft, former president of the United States, who then was chief justice of the Supreme Court. As chief justice, Taft also held the position of chancellor of the Smithsonian. Although Taft protested that he had no knowledge of East Asian art, Meyer urged him to help mediate the disagreement.[51]

During the negotiations, Secretary Walcott died. Action on Lodge's letter of resignation fell to Walcott's successor, Charles Greeley Abbot. It is uncertain whether Taft intervened, but the basic argument about the director of the Freer Gallery always returned to the fact that Lodge was the best-qualified person for the position. In the end, Lodge agreed to Secretary

Abbot's request to reconsider his letter of resignation. Another crisis had passed, and Lodge continued to spend part of each year in Boston.

To Lodge, Secretary Abbot posed an entirely different problem. The new secretary focused his attention on the statement in Freer's will that the income from the bequest was to be used "for the encouragement of the study of the civilization of the Far East." Abbot proposed to broaden the interpretation of the phrase in an effort to use funds from the Freer bequest to support an expedition to Alaska by an anthropologist in the Smithsonian's Division of Physical Anthropology. Lodge objected: "The generally accepted meaning of the term 'Far East' is, indeed, not far to seek, since both current usage and the dictionary define it as comprising China, Japan, Korea, and Indo-China."[52] Lodge then took Secretary Abbot to task for faulty geography: "This definition is sometimes loosely extended, — though seldom if ever by careful scholars, — to include Manchuria, Mongolia, Turkestan, Kokonor and even Tibet, as parts and dependencies of the Chinese Empire; and the Malay Peninsular, as part of Indo-China; but not, I think, India or Siberia, and certainly not that part of the latter which lies nearest to Alaska and, incidentally, West of Greenwich, — not East of it." Lodge concluded his letter to Abbot with what, for him, was a strong rebuke: "I think Mr. Freer regarded the Smithsonian as a trustee, not as a beneficiary, under the terms of his Bill of Sale and his Will."

Secretary Abbot decided the time had come to obtain a definitive interpretation of Freer's will and deed of gift. The regents of the Smithsonian set up a three-man Special Committee, headed by Charles Evans Hughes, former associate justice of the Supreme Court, to study the matter and make a report. To prepare the Special Committee in its work, the Permanent Committee of the Smithsonian requested the printing of a pamphlet containing material papers relating to the Freer gift and bequest.[53] In his introduction to the pamphlet Secretary Abbot stated solemnly, "We stand at the fork of two ways. Our course depends greatly on the authoritative interpretation of Mr. Freer's directions regarding his Gallery and bequest." The choice to be made was whether the income from the Freer bequest was to be devoted to the purposes enumerated by Freer or applied "to the study of all attributes of the civilized state, so far as associated with the civilization of the Far East."

Though couched in complex legal phraseology, the unanimous opinion of the Special Committee was precise. It found no indication that Freer intended income from his bequest to support anthropological activities of

Fig. 12. Ritual food container, type *fangyi*. China, early Western Zhou dynasty, late 11th–early 10th century B.C., bronze, 35.6 x 24.7 cm. Freer Gallery of Art — Purchase, F30.54. The quality of the casting and the 187-character inscription inside the lid and vessel make this bronze one of the most famous in the Freer collection.

the type proposed by Secretary Abbot. In addition, the Special Committee made it clear that in accepting the Freer bequest, the Smithsonian was required to care for and maintain the gallery without use of any Freer funds.[54] That decision constituted another defining moment in the history of the gallery.

Demands on Lodge's time and energy increased to such a degree that by 1931 it had become clear to him that he could not indefinitely maintain his affiliation with the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. In April 1931 Lodge resigned from his position at the museum and spent the remainder of his life as director of the Freer Gallery.[55] Although Lodge protested that he had published relatively little during his long museum career, it is surprising that he was able to write as much as he did. His earliest article on East Asian art, published in the *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* in December 1911, was an introduction to an exhibition of Japanese costume.[56] The longest and most detailed of Lodge's articles reveals his serious interest in

Chinese Buddhist sculpture, an extension of his own self-assessment as "a student of comparative religion."[57] One of the major monuments of Lodge's directorship is the first catalogue of Chinese bronzes in the Freer Gallery of Art, published in 1946.[58] It presents fifty-six Chinese bronzes from among those acquired by Lodge. Although most comments are brief, they reflect Lodge's careful study of Chinese and Japanese texts. Lodge wrote many of the longer statements shortly after the gallery acquired the bronzes. The catalogue set new standards for research on ancient ritual bronzes, based on information in traditional Chinese texts and more recent findings by contemporary specialists.

Among the finest of the Chinese bronzes purchased by Lodge is a *fangyi*, a ritual food container, invariably illustrated and discussed in studies of Chinese bronzes (fig. 12). To Lodge's credit he purchased the bronze despite doubts raised by colleagues regarding the authenticity of the vessel and its long inscription. In making the decision, Lodge relied on his own understanding of early Chinese bronzes and his judgment of its quality. And, as usual, he was correct.

Fig. 13. Archibald Gibson Wenley (1898–1962), second director of the Freer Gallery of Art, ca. 1950. Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives.

Insisting on the highest standards for himself and his colleagues, Lodge could be caustic about those whose scholarship was less than outstanding. After meeting the Englishman Leigh Ashton, who was in the United States gathering information on Chinese sculpture, Lodge commented, "I had supposed that he might be a serious student of Chinese sculpture, but apparently he is only writing a book about it."[59] In 1924 Ashton published *An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Sculpture.*[60]

John Ellerton Lodge died at Doctor's Hospital in Washington, D.C., on December 29, 1942, of a coronary occlusion following an operation for cancer. He was sixty-six years old.[61] Lodge gave form to Charles Lang Freer's concept for his museum. He shaped it and provided direction to ensure that the gallery would endure in the way the donor had stipulated. Fortunately for Freer, John Ellerton Lodge was the ideal person for the job: intelligent, patient, and ready to insist — quietly and eloquently — that everyone involved in the project should behave honorably.

Archibald Gibson Wenley
Second Director of the Freer Gallery of Art, 1943–1962

Archibald Gibson Wenley was born on May 5, 1898, in Ann Arbor, Michigan (fig. 13). His father, Robert Mark Wenley, a noted scholar trained at Edinburgh University, was head of the Department of Philosophy at the

Fig. 14. Archibald Gibson Wenley, left, and Carl Whiting Bishop in northern China, ca. 1924. Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives

University of Michigan. Wenley took considerable pride in his heritage and liked to entertain friends by telling stories in the heavy Scotch dialect he had learned from his parents. After finishing high school, Wenley served in France with a railway artillery battery during the First World War. He returned to Ann Arbor following the Armistice and, in 1921, graduated from the University of Michigan. Wenley had intended to become a librarian and, with that goal in mind, completed a training program at the New York Public Library. But his fateful meeting with John Ellerton Lodge at the Freer Gallery in 1924 prompted the young man to embark on an entirely different career.

Wenley agreed to pursue an extended course of training outlined by Lodge. For the first stage in his art-historical education, he joined Carl Whiting Bishop in China in 1924 (fig. 14). In sending Wenley to China, Lodge may have been influenced by the efforts of Édouard Chavannes, especially the French sinologist's seven-month investigation of sites in northern China.[62] The purpose of Chavannes's 1907 tour, which laid the

foundation for archaeological investigations by later Western specialists, was to study all the Chinese monuments in the northern provinces and in Manchuria, to make rubbings, and to photograph them. Chavannes's thorough grasp of Chinese history and extraordinary linguistic abilities, which prompted one individual to describe him as "the first truly modern sinologue," may have been in Lodge's mind as he planned for Wenley to study in China, France, and Japan.[63]

During the first two years of Wenley's educational program he lived in Beijing, where he studied Chinese language and history. Shortly after Wenley reached China, he accompanied Bishop to Xinzheng, Henan Province, to see a hoard of ancient bronzes recently unearthed.[64] It was a rare opportunity for Wenley, at the outset of his career, to witness one of the most important archaeological discoveries in China.

Wenley took part in an archaeological survey and participated in an excavation in southern Henan. In Shanxi Province he studied the well-known but still relatively inaccessible Buddhist caves at Yungang and surveyed the great necropolis at Fangshan.[65] On a trip to Shaanxi Province in March 1924, Wenley saw many of the major monuments, including the mausoleum of Qin Shihuangdi, and investigated the remains of the Tang dynasty capital of Chang'an.[66] Wenley and Bishop occasionally flew over archaeological sites in an eight-seater Vickers-Vimy airplane (fig. 15). From the air the interrelationship of earthworks, mounds, embankments, and foundations could be instantly comprehended, while it would have taken several weeks to survey the same area on foot.

After his sojourn in China, Wenley went to Paris, where, for the next three years, he studied linguistics and history at the École des Langues

Fig. 15. Archibald Gibson Wenley, third from right, with a Vickers-Vimy airplane used to survey ancient Chinese sites, ca. 1924. Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives

Orientales vivantes and the Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises. For the final phase of his training, Lodge arranged for Wenley to study Japanese language and culture for two years in Kyoto. Wenley joined the staff of the Freer Gallery in 1931. A colleague described Wenley as "the first museum man thus solidly trained in the languages, literature, and history of China and Japan to embark on a career in Far Eastern art; he was a pioneer in the new generation of museum curators who approached the subject with an interest and knowledge that went far deeper than the aesthetic appeal that had attracted most of their predecessors. It was to John Lodge that he owed this rigorous indoctrination and it was a debt he never forgot."[67]

Wenley became director of the Freer Gallery in 1943, at the midpoint of America's involvement in the Second World War. His primary task — begun by Lodge — was to protect the collections from possible damage in the event of public demonstrations against Japan and from the less likely possibility of enemy air raids. The Smithsonian had initiated plans to protect its collections in the spring of 1941, before the United States had become directly involved in the war.[68] At the request of Secretary Abbot, Lodge had drawn up plans for an underground bomb-proof storage vault to be constructed under the Freer courtyard. Lodge estimated that the vault, to be built of three-foot-thick reinforced concrete, with a five-foot-thick roof slab, would provide 19,800 cubic feet of storage. A heavy gasketed door, with an antechamber leading to the stairway through another, equally secure door, would have provided an airlock to the vault as well as 2,700 cubic feet of storage and shelter space. The vault would have been adequate to protect all the Freer collections while making them available to the staff and the public.[69]

The Smithsonian decided to wait until it could obtain congressional appropriations to construct storage facilities for all the institution's bureaus and, as it turned out, the vault proposed by Lodge was never built.[70] His plan to use the space under the Freer courtyard anticipated the excavations that took place during the extensive renovation of the gallery in 1987–93. Security precautions in Washington were heightened throughout 1941, and in November, as part of the National Defense Program, all employees of the Freer Gallery were fingerprinted.

On December 8, 1941, the day after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Lodge had every example of Japanese art removed from exhibition and placed in storage. As an alternative to the vault he had originally proposed, Lodge decided to store the collections in the subbasement, a space

designated as War Storage. Lodge may have made his decision in the belief that the gallery's solid limestone masonry construction, with its copper-clad doors and moldings, could sustain a major bomb blast without damage to the subbasement. While continuing to display a select group of American and Asian objects — other than Japanese — in the public galleries, Lodge had all ceramics, lacquers, bronzes, and jades as well as American paintings and pastels stored in sturdy, thirty-two-gallon barrels made of sixteen-gauge galvanized metal, almost one-eighth-inch (.32 cm) thick. To ensure that any object in War Storage could be located with relative ease, Lodge requested that the general categories and accession numbers of the contents of each barrel be painted in red on the lid. Handscrolls and hanging scrolls were placed in galvanized metal tubes, again with red lettering on the exterior to identify the contents. Japanese screens were stored in carefully finished wooden boxes.

Lodge was fearful that Kinoshita Yokichi, the Asian painting conservator, might be subjected to anti-Japanese discrimination while traveling to and from the gallery. He decided, therefore, that it might be better if Kinoshita, a Japanese national, were to work at home. Kinoshita began his new routine on December 8. Since under the terms of Freer's will, it was not possible to remove any art object from the gallery, he limited his work to binding Chinese books for the library. He continued to work at home, except for occasional visits to the gallery, until January 31, 1944, when he resumed his full-time schedule at the gallery.

By the end of 1944 the possibility of enemy air attacks or of public demonstrations had become so remote that all Chinese and Japanese panels and screens as well as American paintings were returned to their regular storage areas. With the exception of a few lacquer figures, the entire collection was unpacked from War Storage and restored to its customary location by late April 1945. Wenley and his staff were relieved when a survey of the collection found that nothing was missing or damaged. The first decision to place Japanese objects on public display came in January 1946, when a few pieces of Japanese pottery were returned to the shelves of the Peacock Room. Three months later Wenley restored the balance of Asian cultures on exhibition when he arranged to have a group of Japanese paintings shown in the galleries they had occupied before 1941. Another signal of a return to prewar attitudes came when Kinoshita went to the United States Marshal's Office early in 1946 and received his radio, opera glasses, binoculars, and three small Japanese flags that had been confiscated three years earlier.

It is typical of Wenley that in 1946, as soon as it was possible to do so, he sent a copy of the first Freer bronze catalogue to Umehara Sueji, his friend and colleague in Japan, together with a letter telling Umehara that Lodge had died four years earlier. The Freer bronze catalogue was the first publication Umehara received from abroad after the end of the war. In a moving tribute, Umehara later wrote about his long friendship with John Ellerton Lodge.[71]

In 1952 Wenley chaired the Japanese Exhibition Committee, consisting of John D. Rockefeller III and the directors of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Seattle Art Museum; Art Institute of Chicago; and Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Wenley's close friendship with Japanese directors and collectors, dating from his student days, was an important factor in the selection process. As a result of the warm relations that characterized the meetings between representatives of the two countries, the committee was able to select a group of outstanding art objects.[72] At the exhibition in 1952–53, Americans viewed the finest collection of Japanese art ever to have come to the United States. Many objects had never left Japan and were not easily accessible even to persons visiting or living in Japan. The exhibition helped dispel distorted national stereotypes and signaled renewed cultural relations between Japan and the United States.

Wenley always paid particular attention to the library of the Freer Gallery, not surprising in view of his early training as a librarian. Under his direction the library expanded from a roomful of miscellaneous books on East Asian art to a highly specialized collection of journals and monographs, in all languages, cared for by professional librarians. Wenley also initiated several scholarly publications, which continue to be associated with the museum. He knew that among Freer's bequests was a sum of money given to the University of Michigan, the income of which, in Freer's words, "shall be used to add to the knowledge and appreciation of Oriental art."[73] This important provision had never been fully operative, although a portion of the income had been used to support publication of the scholarly journal *Ars Islamica,* the first volume of which appeared in 1934. Even though the editorial in the inaugural issue of *Ars Islamica* was extremely optimistic about future goals, the Department of Fine Arts of the University of Michigan, which was ultimately responsible for *Ars Islamica,* was faced with the decision, because of rising costs, to reduce the size of the journal or change it entirely.[74] In 1951 the publication changed in scope and

Fig. 16. Richard Ettinghausen (1906–1979), curator of Near Eastern art at the Freer Gallery of Art (1944–66). Ettinghausen was instrumental in acquiring this painting (67.1 x 51.2 cm) from the *Hamzanama*, ca. 1562–77, one of the earliest illustrated works of the Mughal period. Freer Gallery of Art—Purchase, F49.18. Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives

in name. Wenley and his colleagues believed that the new publication, *Ars Orientalis* (expanded to embrace the arts of all regions of Asia), would reflect more faithfully Freer's intentions. While the journal would follow the policies evolved by *Ars Islamica,* it was intended that *Ars Orientalis* would publish longer contributions. The first issue appeared in 1954, with Richard Ettinghausen, the gallery's curator of Near Eastern art, as editor (fig. 16). Ettinghausen, who had joined the Freer staff in 1944, received his doctoral degree in Islamic civilization in 1931 from the University of Frankfurt. He embodied the scholarly tradition toward which Freer and Lodge had guided the gallery from its inception, and the reputation of the gallery's Near Eastern and Indian holdings derives from his steadfast insistence on excellence.[75]

Another major innovation during Wenley's tenure as director was the presentation of the Charles Lang Freer Medal to mark the centenary of Freer's birth.[76] Katharine Rhoades suggested to Wenley that a "very fine small bronze plaque or medal" in memory of Freer might "be used as an award for very outstanding and distinguished pieces of work done in one of the fields of Mr. Freer's and the Gallery's interest."[77] She further suggested that the medal be presented over the years in recognition of scholarly achievement. To familiarize herself with different kinds of medals that had been made from antiquity to the present, Rhoades studied the Greek coin and medal collections at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. For the design of the medal, she proposed that Wenley contact the American sculptor Paul Manship, who had known Freer and had visited his Detroit home in 1914. Wenley responded favorably. When writing to tell Rhoades of his views as to who might be the first recipient, he expressed his own gratitude to his mentor and predecessor: "It occurred to me that the person who has done more than anyone else to establish the whole pattern of study of Far Eastern arts in this country was the late John Ellerton Lodge. What would you think of making a posthumous presentation, perhaps to Mrs. Lodge, or, if she does not like to do it, have Cabot come and make the acceptance for the family?"[78]

Without disagreeing with Wenley's choice, Miss Rhoades countered that it "might be grim" to award the first Freer Medal posthumously to Lodge. If that were to be done, however, she proposed giving another Freer Medal to a living person at the same time. Wenley reconsidered his initial suggestion and finally chose the Swedish sinologist Osvald Sirén for his wide-ranging contribution to knowledge of Asian art and culture.

Fig. 17. Obverse and reverse of the Charles Lang Freer Medal, designed by Paul Manship (1885–1966). Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives

To guide Manship in preparing his preliminary design of the bronze medal, Wenley provided the sculptor with photographs of Freer and of his death mask. The final design included a profile bust of Freer and his name set within a raised circle. Freer's life dates (the year of his birth incorrectly given as 1856) are superimposed on stylized clouds rising above the horizontal facade of the Freer Gallery. The words "Smithsonian Institution" and "Freer Gallery of Art" enclose the entire composition. On the reverse, Manship combined a laurel crown, the legend "For distinguished contribution to the knowledge and understanding of Oriental civilizations as reflected in their arts," and a rectangle in low relief in which could be engraved the name of the recipient and the date of the presentation (fig. 17). A copy of the Freer Medal is included in the Smithsonian's collection of medals.[79]

Osvald Sirén, then seventy-seven years old, had written extensively on both European and East Asian art. He was a former professor of the history of art at Stockholm University and, at the time of the medal presentation, was keeper emeritus of pictures and sculptures at the National Museum of Stockholm. Count Carl L. Douglas, minister plenipotentiary, representing the ambassador of Sweden, and Katharine Rhoades, representing "friends to the Freer Collection" named in Freer's will, were among the three hundred guests in the Freer auditorium on February 25, 1956. In his remarks, Wenley spoke of the contributions of the gallery's first director. He referred to the centennial birthday exhibition that included many original Freer pieces as well as important additions made since 1920, due "in no small measure to the wisdom and taste of my eminent predecessor, the late John Ellerton Lodge."

Wenley's major innovation at the gallery, and in some ways the most important contribution he made to its research functions and to the welfare of the collections, was his establishment of the Technical Laboratory in 1951. The arrival of Rutherford J. Gettens signaled the beginning of a program of research on metals and pigments that established the Freer Gallery as a center for the analysis and preservation of Asian antiquities (fig. 18). As a chemist in what later became the Department of Conservation, Gettens had been associated with the Fogg Art Museum in Cambridge, Massachusetts, from 1928 to 1951.[80] When he founded the Freer Technical Laboratory, Gettens initially worked in a small room overflowing with equipment, test tubes, and chemicals. The need for additional space became even more urgent when Elisabeth West FitzHugh joined Gettens as a laboratory assistant in 1956 and W. Thomas Chase became their colleague

Fig. 18. Rutherford J. Gettens (1900–1974), first head of the Technical Laboratory at the Freer Gallery of Art, ca. 1969. Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives

in 1965. Several years later, when Gettens was able to expand his activities into an adjoining office, he joked that the director had finally given him room to sit down. Gettens's slightly bemused manner and habit of forgetting where he had placed books and papers belied his keen powers of concentration. He was tenacious in his pursuit of data that might yield answers to questions about how and when an artifact had been made.[81] With equal determination Gettens guided the gallery's research program that, in the broadest sense, might be described as an investigation into the methods and materials of ancient artists.

The first major project undertaken by Gettens and his staff was an extended study of Chinese bronze ceremonial vessels. Noting that the first Freer bronze catalogue was no longer in print, Wenley suggested that Gettens make a technical study of each piece in the collection and incorporate his findings into a new catalogue. The analysis of the composition, fabrication techniques, and corrosion products of Chinese bronzes raised standards in the study of Chinese metallurgy.[82] Gettens and his staff also carried out extensive analysis of pigments associated with East Asian paintings. Other projects involved the identification of Chinese jades and related hardstones, the composition of efflorescences appearing on museum objects, and certain technical aspects of Sasanian silver.

After his retirement in 1968, Gettens was appointed research consultant, a position he held until his death in 1974.[83] He was succeeded by W. Thomas Chase, who continued the gallery's commitment to the investigation of ancient Chinese bronze technology. Chase expanded the focus of research to include the significance of isotopes in identifying the sources of lead used by ancient Chinese bronze casters and, by extrapolation, in determining the areas where specific bronzes might have been cast.[84] Chase retired in 1997 after more than thirty years of service.

The gallery's East Asian Painting Conservation Studio, housed in a specially designed area fitted with Japanese tatami, has been in operation since 1924, a year after the museum opened to the public. It remains one of three major studios of its kind in the United States. The restoration of Chinese and Japanese paintings and screens requires traditional skills and techniques, and in the West few qualified specialists perform this work.

As early as 1920, Lodge arranged for Kinoshita Yokichi, the Asian painting mounter at the Museum of Fine Arts, to spend several months each year at the Freer Gallery. Eighteen months after Lodge resigned from the Museum of Fine Arts, Kinoshita became a full-time employee of the

gallery.[85] He survived the difficult years of the Second World War and, after his retirement in August 1950, returned to Japan, where he died on October 7, 1952. Before his death, Kinoshita recommended that Sugiura Takashi be hired to replace him. Sugiura reported for duty on June 3, 1953, continuing the traditional methods of repairing objects in the collection.

Epigraphy had a special appeal to Wenley. He enjoyed deciphering inscriptions on ancient ritual bronzes, transcribing seal impressions, and unraveling the content of painting colophons. The care he brought to his work is evident in his published articles. His notes in the gallery files testify to his careful analysis of Chinese and Japanese texts. In addition to his role in compiling the first Freer bronze catalogue, Wenley wrote about a celebrated bronze rhinoceros in the Avery Brundage Collection[86] and a set of four bronze tripods, one of which he acquired for the gallery in 1950.[87] Wenley's articles on the seals and inscriptions found on scrolls by Wu Zhen, Guo Xi, and Zou Fulei in the Freer collection are models of erudite scholarship.[88]

While Wenley was less interested in painting styles and the implications of stylistic change, he was responsible for adding many exceptional Chinese and Japanese paintings and Chinese bronzes to the collection. Wenley also approved recommendations from curators for the acquisition of outstanding Indian and Near Eastern objects. Several of those acquisitions had been admired by Freer when they were displayed in Paris in 1903.[89]

Charles Lang Freer's bequest to the University of Michigan enables graduate students in Asian art history to pursue research at the Freer Gallery. James F. Cahill, one of the first Freer Fellows, eventually joined the gallery staff. Cahill studied Asian languages as an undergraduate at the University of California, Berkeley, and completed his graduate work — master's degree in 1952 and doctoral degree in 1958 — at the University of Michigan under the guidance of Max Loehr. During the postwar years interest in all areas of Asian art was renewed, and Loehr, who arrived in Ann Arbor in 1951, played a major role in increasing scholarly research in Chinese art history.

Cahill's intellectual and verbal exuberance are evident in his dissertation on the Yuan dynasty master Wu Zhen.[90] Reflecting Loehr's emphasis on the meaning of style and the logic of its development, Cahill's research set a new standard for textual and stylistic analysis of Chinese painting. Cahill's dissertation quickly achieved the status of a basic reference work, studied and quoted by everyone interested in Chinese painting. Equally influential

was his general survey of Chinese painting published in 1961.[91] While Cahill was curator of Chinese art at the Freer Gallery from 1956 to 1965, he reviewed the painting collection and made many important findings.[92] His critical evaluations of Chinese painting, especially works of the later periods, resolved many theoretical and methodological problems. In 1965 Cahill accepted a position at the University of California, Berkeley, where he continued to raise the level of research on Chinese painting.

During Wenley's directorship the Freer staff was a small, tightly knit group. He continued the practice, introduced by Lodge, of having staff members and their guests lunch together in the Staff Room. Afterward, the curators usually joined Wenley for a walk through the galleries during which would occur an informal yet frank exchange of ideas about the collection. One of Wenley's staff members described him and his attitudes:

> In his conduct of the Gallery, in his Sinological research, and in his professional relationships as a scholar and administrator, Archibald Wenley was a man of strict conservatism and of absolute integrity. In an age when more and more museums are turning to the meretricious methods of Madison Avenue and more and more directors are poisoned by the passion for publicity, he stood firm in his belief that quality speaks for itself and that no amount of ballyhoo can make a masterpiece out of a mediocrity. He had no patience with ostentation; and nothing was more repellent to him than the practice of displaying fine works of art in the cheap glare of neon lights, nothing further from his taste than the notion that a museum should be regarded as a sideshow. Yet he was by no means severe, and all who knew him will remember his ready humor and unfailing courtesy.[93]

Wenley's final years as director were made difficult by a long battle with cancer. He underwent surgery on September 30, 1958, and a year later reentered the hospital. He died at his son's home in Arlington, Virginia, on February 17, 1962. On the day of Wenley's funeral, the flag on the roof of the Freer Gallery flew at half-mast in mourning for the death of the second director.[94]

John Alexander Pope
Third Director of the Freer Gallery of Art, 1962–1971

John Alexander Pope was associated with the Freer Gallery of Art for almost forty years (fig. 19). During that period, encompassing two-thirds of

Fig. 19. John Alexander Pope (1906–1982), third director of the Freer Gallery of Art, ca. 1967. He is holding a Six Dynasties period, 4th–5th century, black glazed Yue-ware ewer.

the entire history of the museum, his insistence on excellence in his own research and on the highest quality for those objects acquired and displayed in the gallery continued a tradition envisioned by Charles Freer and perpetuated by John Lodge and Archibald Wenley.

John Pope was born in Detroit, on August 4, 1906. Katharine Rhoades, Freer's secretary, was a close friend of the Pope family. That friendship as well as the Pope family's active support of Theodore Roosevelt's presidential campaigns made it inevitable that they should meet Charles Freer, who also was an enthusiastic champion of Roosevelt's political ambitions. One of John Pope's earliest memories was of the afternoon when, as a very young boy, he accompanied his mother to Freer's home on Ferry Avenue and had tea with the man whose museum and collections would play a vital role in his life.

Pope attended private and public schools in Detroit and then went to Phillips Exeter Academy. Following graduation in 1925, Pope attended Yale College. He entered Yale with the class of 1929 but left New Haven shortly before final examinations were scheduled and went to China, where he served as a volunteer truck driver for the American Red Cross. When Pope returned to the United States in the autumn of 1929, he passed his examinations and received his bachelor's degree in 1930.

While in China Pope accompanied officials of the International Famine Relief Commission as they surveyed famine conditions in the Yellow River Valley. At the time China was ravaged by civil war and Pope was aware of the possibility of attack as he drove through the bandit-infested mountains of the northern provinces (fig. 20). Later, in the 1970s, when Chinese archaeological journals carried reports of exciting finds of life-sized terra cotta warriors unearthed near the funerary mound of Qin Shihuangdi in Shaanxi Province, Pope commented that he had driven a truck over the site almost fifty years earlier.

The unstable political situation witnessed by Pope during his travels through the Chinese countryside had relatively little effect on the lives of foreign students living in Beijing during the 1920s. Their dedication to Chinese culture prompted Pope to think seriously about becoming a sinologist.

After a brief association with Chase National Bank in New York (1930–32) and a two-year stint as executive secretary of the People's Museum Association of the Detroit Institute of Arts (1932–34), Pope enrolled in the graduate program in Chinese studies and fine arts at

Fig. 20. John Alexander Pope, seated second from right, in Xi'an, with the Committee of the China International Famine Relief Commission, 1929. John Alexander Pope Papers, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives

Harvard University, where he studied with Benjamin Rowland and Laurence Sickman. As a traveling fellow of the Harvard-Yenching Institute in 1938, he had an opportunity to examine Chinese art in European collections and to study Chinese archaeology for one term at the Courtauld Institute in London. He earned his master's degree at Harvard in 1940.

Pope was a lecturer in Chinese art at Columbia University (1942–43) before joining the staff of the Freer Gallery as associate in research on April 1, 1943. He was fond of saying that beginning his work at the gallery on April Fool's Day made it easy for him to remember that anniversary. Pope also recalled how unaware people in Washington were of the Freer Gallery. Soon after he joined the museum staff, Pope met a charming elderly woman at a party and, in the course of their conversation, he mentioned that he had come to Washington to work at the Freer Gallery. He was a bit taken aback when the woman responded enthusiastically, "How wonderful! It must be thrilling to work every day with all those old Shakespeare manuscripts."

One of Pope's first tasks was to assist Archibald Wenley in compiling the China volume for the Smithsonian Institution War Background Studies, which surveyed Chinese history and culture.[95] On April 7, 1945, two years after he joined the Freer staff, Pope left for active military service as an interpreter in the Marine Corps. His duties in East Asia included a crucial stay in newly liberated Beijing. While in China, Pope embarked on what

was to become a lifelong project: a systematic analysis of the development of Chinese blue-and-white porcelain wares.

Among the diplomats who had remained in China throughout the Second World War was Jean-Pierre Dubosc of the French foreign service. A shrewd connoisseur of Chinese ceramics, Dubosc had assembled during his years in China a small but outstanding collection of early blue-and-white porcelain. After some polite negotiations, Pope bought eight of Dubosc's porcelains for four hundred dollars. Some years later, he realized that most of the porcelains had been made during the Ming dynasty. Pope cheerfully admitted his admiration of Dubosc's connoisseurship, always adding that his purchase of Dubosc's blue-and-white porcelains was one of the best investments he had ever made.

On July 1, 1946, approximately two months after Pope returned to the gallery from military service, he was appointed assistant director. For the next sixteen years he concentrated his research on Asian ceramics, a field in which he achieved an international reputation. Pope's publications on Chinese blue-and-white porcelain are regarded as seminal contributions. The examples he assembled for the Freer Gallery reflect his personal interest in the developments at the Jingdezhen kilns in Jiangxi Province during the fourteenth to seventeenth century.

When Pope first saw the large collection of Chinese porcelains in the Topkapu Sarayı Müzesi in Istanbul in the summer of 1950, he realized immediately their importance for research in identifying the characteristics of early Chinese blue-and-white wares.[96] He drew on material in the official inventories and palace archives in Istanbul to review the history of Chinese ceramics assembled by the Ottoman sultans during the sixteenth to eighteenth century. Pope discussed a group of fourteenth-century blue-and-white ceramics from Istanbul to establish the basic characteristics of the early wares.[97] His study formed the basis of his dissertation; he was awarded a doctoral degree from Harvard University in 1955. Pope's best-known work, published in 1956, is *Chinese Porcelains from the Ardebil Shrine,* universally accepted as a standard analysis of Ming dynasty porcelains.[98] A logical sequel to his earlier study of the collection, it concentrates on the important blue-and-white porcelains from the Ardebil Shrine in northwestern Iran, a structure dedicated in 1611 by Shāh 'Abbās (reigned 1588–1629).

Throughout his career Pope was responsible for acquiring many Asian ceramics now in the Freer collection. In 1957 Pope noticed an early fifteenth-century blue-and-white porcelain canteen offered by Sotheby's in

Fig. 21. Bowl, China, Ming dynasty, 2d half 15th century, porcelain, height 9.5, diameter 20.4 cm. Freer Gallery of Art — Purchase, F52.4. For many connoisseurs, blue-and-white porcelain of this style and quality represents the essence of Chinese taste and its peak of perfection.

London.[99] When the canteen arrived at the gallery it was stuffed with old scraps of paper and miscellaneous trash, including a City of Westminster electric light bill dated in the early 1920s, which prompted Pope to suggest that the pot evidently had been sitting in a London drawing room for more than thirty years. Among the gallery's Chinese blue-and-white porcelains, a late fifteenth-century bowl decorated with figures in a landscape was one of Pope's favorite pieces (fig. 21). When escorting colleagues through the galleries, Pope would invariably stop in front of the bowl to point out the piece he was most proud of having acquired for the Freer.[100]

Besides researching Chinese ceramics, Pope surveyed the gallery's outstanding collection of Chinese bronzes, particularly the mirrors. He contributed to the first of the Freer's bronze catalogues, *A Descriptive and Illustrative Catalogue of Chinese Bronzes Acquired during the Administration of John Ellerton Lodge,* published in 1946. The detailed discussion of individual bronzes and quality of illustrations established that catalogue as a model for scholarly publication on the subject.

With James F. Cahill, Noel Barnard, and Rutherford J. Gettens, Pope also played a major role in the preparation of the second Freer bronze catalogue, *The Freer Chinese Bronzes,* published in 1967. Pope based the dimensions, layout, and typeface of the volume on the Cull Chinese bronze catalogue compiled by W. Percival Yetts.[101] Technical studies of the Freer bronzes, instrumental to an understanding of fabrication, alloys, and casting, carried out by Gettens and his staff, were published in a second volume two years later.[102]

Asian ceramics always remained at the center of Pope's interest. During his many trips to Asia and Africa he sought a better understanding

of the trade routes along which those ceramics were carried to various parts of the world. In his numerous lectures, articles, and reviews Pope frequently discussed different aspects of export ceramics. When an international seminar on trade pottery was held in Manila in 1968, he was invited to serve as cochairman.[103]

Pope became director of the Freer Gallery in 1962 following the death of Archibald Wenley. Despite steadily increasing administrative burdens, Pope maintained an active research program. A demanding scholar, he could be severe in supervising the activities of staff members at the Freer Gallery, but he never failed to recognize important accomplishments and to comment on them. Invariably concise, his observations were always enlivened with characteristic humor. Nowhere were Pope's wit and personal charm more apparent than when he was examining objects brought to the gallery. He had the enviable ability to tell collectors, without annoying them, that their supposedly ancient treasures were of fairly recent date and of modest value. Some people left the gallery even more excited than when they came because they finally knew what it was they owned.

Pope's abilities as a connoisseur and administrator resulted in his being asked to participate in many international activities. For example, he was the American member of the consultative committee for the international exhibition of Chinese art held in Venice in 1954 to celebrate the seven hundredth anniversary of the birth of Marco Polo. In 1961, when the government of the Republic of China staged an exhibition of Chinese art treasures from Taiwan, Pope chaired the selection committee for the United States and the catalogue committee.[104] In 1966 Pope collaborated with Bo Gyllensvärd, curator of the royal collection, in organizing the exhibition and writing the catalogue *Chinese Art from the Collection of H.M. King Gustav VI Adolf of Sweden.* That same year, King Gustav Adolf presented Pope with the Royal Order of the Northern Star in recognition of his work for the exhibition. In 1971 Pope was honored by the Oriental Ceramic Society as the first recipient of the Hills Gold Medal.[105] Established in honor of the society's fiftieth anniversary, the medal carries the citation, "For distinguished contribution to the study of Oriental art."

Following his retirement in 1971, Pope held the concomitant titles of director emeritus and research curator of Far Eastern ceramics. With time available for undisturbed study, Pope spent long hours in the gallery's ceramic storage, reviewing his early notes and revising them in light of more recent scholarship. One of Pope's last major projects was to serve,

with his long-time friend Koyama Fujio, as adviser for the twelve-volume series *Oriental Ceramics: The World's Great Collections*, published by Kodansha. Pope coedited the volume on the ceramic collection in the Freer Gallery.[106]

Pope's major contribution to the gallery was to focus on the ceramic collections, adding examples of outstanding quality, and, by his own research, broadening scholarly understanding of Asia's ceramic traditions. Throughout the months of his final illness Pope continued to work on a manuscript relating to Japanese porcelain, the result of years of research and study of kiln sites and textual sources in Japan. John Pope died of a stroke on September 18, 1982.[107]

Harold P. Stern
Fourth Director of the Freer Gallery of Art, 1971–1977

Harold P. Stern, known to virtually everyone as Phil, belonged to the generation of American scholars of Asia whose interests were kindled by language training and travel during the Second World War (fig. 22). With other American servicemen he underwent intensive Japanese language instruction at the University of Michigan and later served with the occupation forces in Japan. Stern's military associates were familiar with his wit and deep interest in art. During a particularly rigorous training exercise, when Stern and members of his company were crouched in a muddy foxhole, someone wryly asked whether there was anything to read. Without a word, Stern handed the fellow recruit the latest issue of *Antiques* magazine, which he carried in his backpack.

Fig. 22. Harold P. Stern (1922–1977), fourth director of the Freer Gallery of Art, ca. 1970. Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives

After the war Stern returned to Ann Arbor to study Asian art history under the guidance of James Marshall Plumer.[108] Stern came to the Freer Gallery in December 1949 as the first Freer Fellow in the exchange program between the Freer Gallery and the University of Michigan, funded by the Freer bequest. His research on the gallery's large collection of Japanese ukiyo-e painting eventually became the subject of his doctoral dissertation.[109] In the preface to his dissertation, Stern comments that although he had examined many collections, he relied almost entirely on paintings in the Freer Gallery because it is, "one of the largest collections of ukiyoe paintings in the world. It surpasses those in Japan and, save for those in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts, is unrivaled. . . . It is the only collection where a comprehensive study of the paintings of artists, such as Hokusai, can be made." In January 1951 Stern was appointed assistant in

research and from that time on the Freer Gallery remained the focus of his career. He served as assistant director under John Pope from 1962 to 1971 and, following Pope's retirement, became director in August 1971.

Although the Freer bequest included a large group of important Japanese paintings, sculptures, and ceramics, John Lodge, Archibald Wenley, and John Pope made relatively few additions to the Japanese collection. Throughout Stern's twenty-six years at the gallery, especially while he was director, he concentrated on building the Japanese collection. Fortunately during those years objects of outstanding artistic and cultural significance were available on the international market. Japanese officials in the Bunkachō (Agency for the Protection of Cultural Properties) had great respect for Stern and for the Freer Gallery, and they allowed Japanese antiquities to leave the country, provided they became part of the Freer collection.

Among the best known of the Japanese antiquities acquired during Stern's years at the Freer is the Heian period painting of the Buddhist deity Fugen (fig. 23). Purchased for $150,000 in 1963, the twelfth-century image is one of the largest Heian paintings of Fugen.[110] Stern also was successful in acquiring a set of small wooden figures of the Shitennō (Four guardian kings) dating from the Kamakura period (1185–1333).[111]

Fig. 23. Bodhisattva Fugen, Japan, Heian period, 12th century, ink, color, gold, and silver on silk, 155.6 x 83.1 cm. Freer Gallery of Art—Purchase, F63.6

Almost immediately after being appointed director, Stern had to cope with the need for additional funding. Although Charles Freer had left a generous endowment to support many of the major activities of the gallery, including acquisitions, growing inflation and increasing staff salaries meant that less money was available for purchases. After long discussions with legal experts at the Smithsonian, Stern proposed a change in the procedures by which the gallery could receive gifts from donors. The terms of the Freer bequest specified that the gallery could accept gifts of objects from only five of Freer's personal friends: Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Meyer, Jr.; Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer; Frank J. Hecker; and Charles A. Platt. By the early 1970s all five had died. When other collectors with close ties to the gallery wanted to donate objects to the collection—objects that the gallery was keen to accept—the transfer of ownership was accompanied by the payment of the nominal price of one dollar. Stern knew that Freer had included the stipulation regarding gifts in his will because of his interest in maintaining a high level of quality for the collections. After studying the matter carefully, Stern suggested that objects offered as gifts be subjected to the same intense scrutiny as those considered for purchase—a procedure Freer had also laid down when making his bequest. Those objects had to be

approved by the director and curators of the gallery; by the secretary of the Smithsonian, acting for the regents; and by the National Fine Arts Commission. The only difference in the procedure proposed by Stern was that when a donor gave an object to the gallery there would be no exchange of money.

In 1973 Stern presided over the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the public opening of the Freer Gallery. He organized three special exhibitions, symposia, and the presentation of the Freer Medal to three outstanding East Asian scholars. Stern also wrote the catalogue of the first of the anniversary exhibitions, *Ukiyo-e Painting,* in which he selected 118 masterpieces from more than five hundred examples in the collection. The review of the Japanese exhibition, written by John Canaday, art critic of the *New York Times,* was entitled, "The Aristocrat of American Museums Has a Birthday."[112] Canaday described the museum in terms that would have pleased Charles Freer and certainly delighted Stern: "Born rich and beautiful just fifty years ago, the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington is the aristocrat of American museums. Like all true patricians who have neither lost their money or gone to seed, the Freer is so secure in its station that any hint of snobbism, the first symptom of decline from high places, is out of the question." The anniversary festivities were marked by receptions, luncheons, and dinners. Since space inside the museum was limited, Stern arranged to have striped tents erected in the Victorian garden adjacent to the Freer, where he received friends, guests, and staff.

Stern was extremely generous in sharing his expertise with cultural institutions throughout the world. He organized six exhibitions of Asian art from American collections, and his willingness to assist other organizations prompted colleagues to refer to him as the "curator-at-large to the nation."[113] After Stern had become ill with hepatitis in 1975, he still managed to complete the catalogue for the exhibition *Birds, Beasts, Blossoms, and Bugs: The Nature of Japan,* held in 1976 at the University of California, Los Angeles.

In many ways the culmination of Stern's tenure as director came in October 1975, when Emperor Hirohito and Empress Nagako of Japan made an official tour of the United States. The visit of the emperor and empress to Washington coincided with the exhibition *Art Treasures from the Imperial Collections,* displayed in the Great Hall of the Smithsonian Castle. Stern and members of the Freer staff were involved in preparations for the exhibition of approximately forty objects from the Imperial Household

Collection. One major problem involved the design of display cases capable of maintaining the internal humidity levels prescribed by Japanese officials. A study of the Freer exhibition cases and the environmental controls maintained in the gallery, reinforced by Stern's assurances, convinced Japanese authorities that the Imperial Household treasures would be adequately protected.

On October 2, while Emperor Hirohito toured the National Museum of Natural History, Empress Nagako visited the Freer Gallery (fig. 24). Plans for the imperial visit began several weeks in advance when the Japanese embassy submitted a list of paintings in the Freer collection that the empress had specifically expressed interest in seeing. Many requested works were by seventeenth-century artists of the Rimpa school, a tradition that had influenced her own painting style. Stern arranged to have fourteen of those scrolls and screens placed in the galleries. He also selected a special group of Japanese art treasures from the Freer's holdings and had them set out on tables in the storage area so that the empress could examine them more closely. His decision made a considerable impression on the empress, who told Stern that she rarely had the opportunity to handle antiquities in Japanese museums.

Fig. 24. Empress Nagako of Japan and Harold P. Stern examine Japanese antiquities in the storage area of the Freer Gallery of Art, October 2, 1975. Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives

Friends and colleagues who visited Stern at home remember the experience vividly. Virtually every inch of space was filled with his various collections of books, phonograph records, prints, drawings, ceramics, and assorted miscellany. Stern's many books overflowed the shelves lining the walls and were stacked — temporarily, he would assure anxious visitors — in precarious piles. Although he claimed to be able to find any book he might need, at times he had to admit defeat and, with resignation, purchase a second copy. His collection of phonograph records — featuring such diverse offerings as Marlene Dietrich on 78 disks, rarely performed operas, and bagpipe competitions — demanded increasingly more space. Eventually Stern resorted to storing phonograph records in the freezer and in the oven. Perhaps the single object in Stern's home arousing the most acute curiosity and amusement was a highly polished, regulation-size, deep-sea diver's copper helmet that glittered ominously in one corner of the guest bathroom.

During the final year of his directorship Stern became increasingly ill with hepatitis. Although he continued working, Stern was forced to conserve his strength by reducing the number of hours he spent at the gallery. Throughout his illness Stern maintained his keen sense of humor and

continued to oversee many day-to-day museum activities. Stern died on April 3, 1977.[114] His colleagues immediately organized a memorial exhibition selected from those objects acquired during his directorship.

At the memorial service held for Stern at the Washington Hebrew Congregation on April 27, 1977, Laurence Sickman, director emeritus of the Nelson-Atkins Gallery of Art, summed up Stern's professional life and achievements: "Phil Stern's love was Japan, not simply the traditional Japan of the art historians, but Japan of today as well — its people, its life-style, its cities and the beauty of its countryside. How natural it was, then, that Phil's personal interest should lead him to the arts of the Edo period, those happy years of the great decorators, the robust theatre, the bright ceramics and the lively popular art of the woodblock prints. Japanese prints, more than any art of East Asia, epitomize the pursuit of happiness."

Thomas Lawton
Fifth Director of the Freer Gallery of Art, 1977–1987
Founding Director of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 1982–1987

Thomas Lawton was born in 1931 and grew up in Massachusetts. He studied drawing and painting from childhood and pursued those interests as an undergraduate at the Rhode Island School of Design and the Durfee Technical Institute (fig. 25). The only practical result of that early training, he once commented, is an ability to write Chinese characters that look as though they had been drawn by a backward child.

Lawton began his study of East Asian art history quite by chance when he attended graduate school at the University of Iowa in the late 1950s. After studying with Chu-tsing Li, he decided to focus on Chinese art and went to Harvard University, where he had the good fortune to further his linguistic and art history training under the guidance of Max Loehr. It was not an ideal time to study Chinese culture since the governments of the United States and the People's Republic of China had severed formal diplomatic ties in 1949. Opportunities for research and travel in mainland China were not immediately available to graduate students and young scholars of Lawton's generation. As an alternative, after Lawton completed his course work at Harvard in 1963, he accepted a Fulbright Fellowship enabling him to study the Qing dynasty imperial collections in the National Palace Museum. The Nationalist government had shipped the collections to Taiwan in 1948–49 and stored them in warehouses on the outskirts of Taizhong in the central part of the island.

Fig. 25. Thomas Lawton, fifth director of the Freer Gallery of Art and founding director of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, ca. 1975. Dr. Lawton holds a ritual food vessel, type *ding* — China, early Western Zhou dynasty, early 10th century B.C., bronze; 16.5 x 15.0 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, F46.4. Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives

While at Harvard, Lawton had seen the *Chinese Art Treasures* exhibition, consisting mainly of paintings from Taiwan. The exhibition marked the first time the holdings of the National Palace Museum had been exhibited in the United States.[115] John Pope, then director of the Freer Gallery, chaired the American selection committee for the exhibition and James F. Cahill, the Freer's curator of Chinese art, helped prepare the catalogue.

Lawton's arrival in Taiwan in September 1963 coincided with several developments that would significantly influence his career. A project cosponsored by the National Palace Museum and the Freer Gallery to photograph all the famous Chinese paintings and a selection of other antiquities in the Taiwan collection was under way. Cahill, with Raymond A. Schwartz, the Freer's photographer, spent several months in Taizhong during 1963 working with museum specialists.[116] Lawton was one of several American graduate students allowed to observe the daily photographic sessions. Whenever the technicians paused to load film or adjust equipment, Lawton took advantage of the opportunity to study the objects before they were returned to storage.

During this time the National Palace Museum was making plans to construct in Taibei a new museum for the Qing imperial collections. To prepare for the transfer of the collections and installation of the inaugural exhibition, museum curators compiled a Chinese handbook and asked Lawton to translate the text for the English edition.[117] After working closely with the Chinese curators for several months, Lawton was invited to be an adviser at the new museum. His main involvement was to translate into English Chinese texts for exhibitions and publications.

A major advantage of working at the National Palace Museum was the rare opportunity to see objects in the collection and discuss Chinese antiquities with individuals who had studied and handled them for most of their lives. The training Lawton received in Taiwan was invaluable for his own career at the Freer Gallery and gained for him an understanding of traditional Chinese connoisseurship. Lawton was also fortunate in having his Fulbright Fellowship renewed for three consecutive years and, during his fourth and final year in Taiwan, in receiving support from the JDR 3rd Fund.

In the spring of 1967, when John Pope visited the new museum in Taiwan to study the Ming dynasty blue-and-white porcelains, Lawton acted as his translator. The two men had long discussions about Chinese art during the several days Pope was in Taiwan and, before returning to the United States, Pope invited Lawton to join the staff of the Freer Gallery as associate

curator of Chinese art. The invitation came as a complete surprise. While Lawton was familiar with the extensive Chinese holdings at the Freer Gallery, he was hesitant to leave the National Palace Museum. A forceful, yet tactful letter from Max Loehr, in which he emphasized the long-term significance of the Freer curatorship, was a crucial factor in Lawton's decision to accept Pope's invitation.

When Lawton arrived at the gallery in September 1967, Pope took him on a tour of the entire building — including the attic and subbasement. He then suggested that Lawton familiarize himself with the Freer's Chinese collections, just as Pope had done when he first joined the staff in 1943, by methodically studying every Chinese object on exhibition and in storage. It was good advice. The policy, instituted by John Lodge, of recording comments by scholars about Freer objects as part of the curatorial files, allowed Lawton to review opinions spanning the history of the collection. Lawton was particularly impressed by the accuracy of the attributions by Lodge, most of them made forty years earlier and reflecting Lodge's keen understanding of stylistic and qualitative nuances.

Pope also pointed to the door of his own office and explained that it was his practice to leave the door open so that staff members would feel free to walk in and talk with him. It is indicative of Pope's informal administrative style that during his nine years as director of the Freer Gallery, regardless of how busy he might have been, he was always willing to listen to comments, suggestions, or criticisms.

In 1970 Lawton was promoted to curator of Chinese art, and when Pope retired the following year and Harold P. Stern was appointed his successor, Lawton was named assistant director. The three men maintained a cordial working relationship, and their individual areas of expertise provided the breadth of knowledge necessary for a small, specialized museum.

Shortly after Lawton joined the Freer staff, he accompanied Pope and Stern on a visit to the summer home of Agnes E. Meyer in Mount Kisco, New York. Mrs. Meyer was one of five individuals Freer mentioned in his will whose approval was necessary for additions to the collections. Her visits to the gallery to examine objects considered for purchase were memorable occasions. Mrs. Meyer would arrive in a chauffeur-driven limousine, be lifted into a wheelchair, and, after looking at the objects under consideration, insist on being wheeled through the galleries. Her comments about individual pieces on display reflected her impressive knowledge of Asian art, and her stories about Charles Lang Freer attested to her keen memory

of events that had occurred more than fifty years earlier. Mrs. Meyer watched over the gallery with the devotion of someone who had been charged, as indeed she had been, with a sacred trust. When she felt Freer's concepts might be threatened, her reaction was formidable.[118]

During their visit to Mount Kisco, Pope, Stern, and Lawton had lunch with Mrs. Meyer in the baronial dining room. At the end of the meal, Mrs. Meyer announced that she was going to have a nap and suggested that the guests make good use of their time by examining all her Asian pieces. She also requested that they prepare a list of objects suitable for the Freer Gallery, making it clear that she would include those in her will. In 1971, the year after Mrs. Meyer died, the gallery organized a memorial exhibition of a selection of the Chinese and Japanese objects she and her husband Eugene had donated to the museum. It was the largest single addition to the museum's collection since the original Freer bequest of 1919. The sixty-one objects included many outstanding Chinese jades and ritual bronzes and a unique twelfth-century handscroll by Li Shan.[119]

In his own research, beginning with his doctoral dissertation, Lawton focused on the activities of Chinese art collectors.[120] When he prepared the catalogue *Chinese Figure Painting* for an exhibition held at the Freer Gallery during the museum's fiftieth anniversary in 1973, he gave considerable attention to the provenance of the fifty-nine scrolls and album leaves selected and noted the various connoisseurs who had owned or seen them.[121] It was the first major exhibition devoted to Chinese figure painting ever held by an American museum.

Following Harold P. Stern's untimely death at the age of fifty-four in 1977, S. Dillon Ripley, then secretary of the Smithsonian, requested a thorough search for the Freer's next director. Ripley had been critical of the terms of the Freer bequest, which he regarded as overly restrictive, and believed it might be easier to initiate changes in the gallery's policies if the new director had no previous association with the museum. Ripley was aware of the tradition at the gallery of selecting the director from among the Asian specialists on the staff, a tradition that in his view might be part of the problem. Although Ripley made it clear it was the prerogative of the secretary of the Smithsonian to select the directors of the museums in the institution, when Lawton was recommended as director of the Freer Gallery, he graciously consented to the appointment.

One of Lawton's first decisions was to invite Richard Louie to join the staff as chief administrative officer (fig. 26). A remarkably capable and

Fig. 26. Richard Louie (1938–1990), assistant director of the Freer Gallery of Art (1977–90)

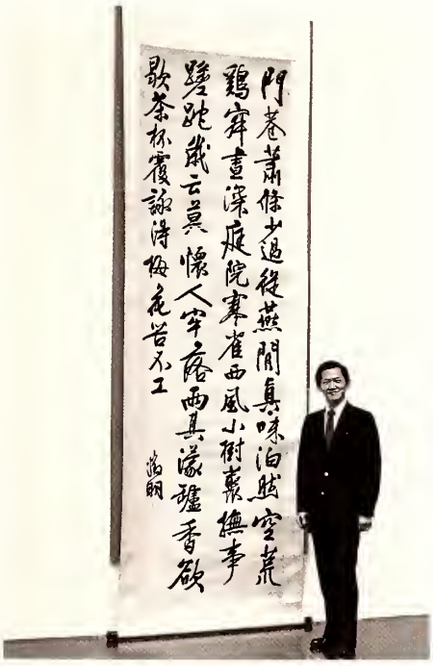


Fig. 27. Fu Shen, curator of Chinese art, ca. 1980, with calligraphy by Wen Zhengming (1470–1559), *At Leisure in My Studio at Year's End*, China, Ming dynasty after 1500, ink on paper, 349.0 x 100.8 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, purchase — funds provided by the Regents' Collections Acquisitions Program, F80.9.

unassuming administrator, who had done his graduate work in Chinese economic history, Louie carried out his duties so conscientiously and with such nimble and disarming wit that he soon won the admiration of colleagues throughout the Smithsonian, especially for his ability to bring the somnolent federal bureaucracy to heel. When Louie became assistant director in 1978 he was the first person to hold that position who had not been trained as an art historian and had not earlier been a member of the curatorial staff. In making judgments involving aesthetic considerations, Louie consistently earned the praise of his colleagues because of his sensitivity. His tragic death in 1990 deprived the gallery of his level-headed and good-humored counsel at a crucial time in its history.

Fu Shen, who was then teaching at Princeton University, was another of Lawton's early appointments (fig. 27). When Fu joined the gallery staff as curator of Chinese art, Lawton urged him to search for important examples of calligraphy for the collection. Considered by the Chinese to be their greatest cultural achievement, calligraphy remained relatively little known in the West. In the 1970s and 1980s it was possible to acquire notable examples for modest prices. His acquisitions greatly expanded the gallery's holdings of Chinese calligraphy, which previously had consisted mainly of inscriptions and colophons on scrolls rather than independent calligraphic works. He also published the most outstanding examples of calligraphy in the collection — including inscriptions and colophons — thereby establishing a new level of research for the Freer's holdings.[122]

In keeping with Lawton's emphasis on publishing the Freer collections, in 1982 Lawton wrote the exhibition catalogue *Chinese Art of the Warring States Period: Change and Continuity, 480–222 B.C.*, which included information from Chinese archaeological journals and interpretations based on his research in mainland China.[123] During the early 1970s the political relationship between the United States and China had changed dramatically, making it possible for Americans to travel to China. In 1973, as a member of the American Archaeological Group, Lawton spent six weeks in China visiting important archaeological sites under the auspices of the Committee for Scholarly Communications with the People's Republic of China. Several years later, when the Smithsonian initiated contacts with mainland Chinese cultural and research institutions, Lawton was a member of the delegation from Washington that traveled throughout China in November 1979. Earlier, in January 1979, Chinese Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping, accompanied by his wife Zhuo Lin, made a state visit to the

United States. On January 30 Lawton escorted Zhuo Lin on a tour of the Freer Gallery, during which she responded enthusiastically to the Chinese bronzes and paintings on display (fig. 28). Another tangible result of the increase in Sino-American cultural exchanges was an exhibition from the Shanghai Museum shown in the National Museum of Natural History in 1984.[124] Lawton had met the curators who accompanied the exhibition during his visits to the Shanghai Museum, and he invited them to the Freer Gallery, where they examined objects and exchanged views with the gallery staff. The friendships established during those first contacts with Chinese colleagues helped resolve any misunderstandings that might have developed during the break in diplomatic relations between the two countries during the 1950s and 1960s.

Lawton introduced changes in the way the gallery's collections were exhibited. He had the gallery walls, all a uniform pinkish tan, painted to complement individual objects on display; he added fabric-covered bases within the walnut exhibition cases; and, perhaps most significant, he encouraged curators to expand the texts of exhibition labels and include Chinese and Japanese characters.

Fig. 28. Zhuo Lin, wife of Deng Xiaoping, then Chinese vice premier, and Thomas Lawton view a Chinese bronze bell in the Freer Gallery, January 30, 1979. Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives

Because Freer had stipulated that the museum's holdings of works by American artists should remain unchanged, there had never been a full-time, permanent curator for that collection. One of the first people hired by John Lodge was Burns A. Stubbs. As assistant to the director, Stubbs performed a variety of duties ranging from writing accession numbers on objects to photographing and showing works of art to visitors. Although Stubbs had no formal art training, he drew on his thirty years of handling the gallery's collections to write two books on Freer's American holdings.[125] Susan Hobbs's acceptance in 1974 of a joint appointment by the Freer Gallery and the Smithsonian's National Collection of Fine Arts marked the beginning of scholarly research on Freer's American holdings. During her four-year association with the gallery, Hobbs completed a study of Whistler's Peacock Room and several articles on Freer as a collector-connoisseur.[126]

Lawton invited David Park Curry to organize an exhibition and compile a catalogue of Freer's Whistler collection in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the artist's birth. Charles Lang Freer regarded the work of James McNeill Whistler as a bridge by which Westerners could reach an understanding of Asian art. The collection of Whistler's paintings and drawings included in the Freer bequest remains one of the most extensive in a single museum. Curry began the project in 1982, organizing

the 1984 exhibition and catalogue.[127] To enable visitors to better understand Whistler's compositions and themes, Curry included several Asian ceramics from the Freer collections in the exhibition. Linda Merrill, the first full-time, permanent curator of American art at the Freer Gallery, joined the staff in 1985. Her publications on Freer and his American collection continue to inform students, scholars, and the general public of the significance of Freer's aesthetic concepts and their relationship to artistic theories prevalent during the donor's lifetime.[128]

The single defining event in Lawton's directorship grew out of a decision by Secretary Ripley in 1975 to develop the rectangular area bordered by the Smithsonian Castle, the Arts and Industries Building, and the Freer Gallery. That plot of land, which had been used for various purposes through the years, not the least of which was to provide a grazing area for American bison, had most recently been transformed into a Victorian garden. The view outside his office window gave Ripley the idea "to create in that space a college, a collegial atmosphere, with a garden and an underground space to do with what we would."[129] Following Ripley's concept, the space was referred to as the Quadrangle.

Secretary Ripley had expressed his impatience with conditions in the Freer bequest prohibiting the gallery from lending objects and from displaying antiquities not part of its permanent collection. He believed the Smithsonian should have an appropriate site for loan exhibitions of Asian art. With an eye toward expanding the Smithsonian's role in non-Western cultural activities, Ripley decided to include a new Asian museum in his plans for the Quadrangle. Congress was less than enthusiastic about providing half the needed seventy-five million dollars to build the Quadrangle. The National Fine Arts Commission also objected to any construction infringing on the grassy, tree-shaded areas of the Mall.

Ripley quickly realized the extreme difficulty of generating support for a new Asian art museum unless the Smithsonian had a collection to put in it. He talked with several collectors, going so far as to have the distinguished Japanese architect Yoshimura Junzō develop the initial architectural concept. When none of the prospective donors responded positively and Congress did not include funds for construction of the Quadrangle, the project appeared to be in jeopardy. At that critical moment, Secretary Ripley met Arthur M. Sackler. A medical doctor with a large Asian art collection, Sackler had made important gifts to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Art Museum at Princeton University (fig. 29).[130]

Ripley and Dr. Sackler quickly established a cordial relationship. According to Dr. Sackler, Ripley expressed interest in his Asian collections for the Smithsonian with extreme subtlety. "I didn't even realize Dillon Ripley was courting me. It was as subtle a courtship as has ever been, but probably the most effective one I've ever encountered."[131] In 1982, when Sackler agreed to provide four million dollars toward the construction of the new museum and to have Smithsonian specialists choose from his collection objects with a value of not less than fifty million dollars, the Quadrangle became a viable project.

Charles Lang Freer's career might be described as a peculiarly American success story, paralleling the fictional achievements of Horatio Alger. The same statement might also be made about Arthur M. Sackler. In donating their art collections to the nation, both men tacitly acknowledged their debt to the country that had made it uniquely possible for them to achieve such outstanding success. Sackler had begun to collect art in the mid-1940s, and throughout his career he had a particular interest in human creativity. He purchased his first piece of art when, in his own words, "I realized the limitations of my own [artistic] talents and at the same time developed a passionate interest in the potentials for medical research."[132] In 1950 Sackler began to acquire Chinese furniture and then Chinese ceramics and later Chinese bronzes, jades, and sculptures, along with West Asian metalwork and Indian sculptures and paintings. When discussing his activities as a collector, Sackler said, "I collect as a biologist. To really understand a society, you must have a large enough corpus of data."[133] On another occasion he remarked, "Art and science are really two sides of the same coin. Science is a discipline pursued with passion; art is a passion pursued with discipline. At pursuing both, I've had a lot of fun."[134]

Fig. 29. Dr. Arthur M. Sackler (1913–1987), ca. 1985. He is holding a Near Eastern silver rhyton, 4th century B.C., Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, S87.0033. Photograph by Henry Groskinsky. Photograph © Mrs. Arthur M. Sackler

When Yoshimura withdrew from the Quadrangle project because of illness, the Boston firm of Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson and Abbott and its principal architect, Jean Paul Carlhian, took charge. In modifying plans developed by Yoshimura, Carlhian acceded to suggestions made by members of Congress and the National Fine Arts Commission. He limited the above-ground elements of the Sackler Gallery to an entrance pavilion and placed below ground two levels containing exhibition galleries, library, offices, conference rooms, and storage facilities (fig. 30). When questioned about the display of his art treasures underground, Sackler, mindful of the archaeological provenance of most of his collection, quickly responded, "That is where most of it came from originally."

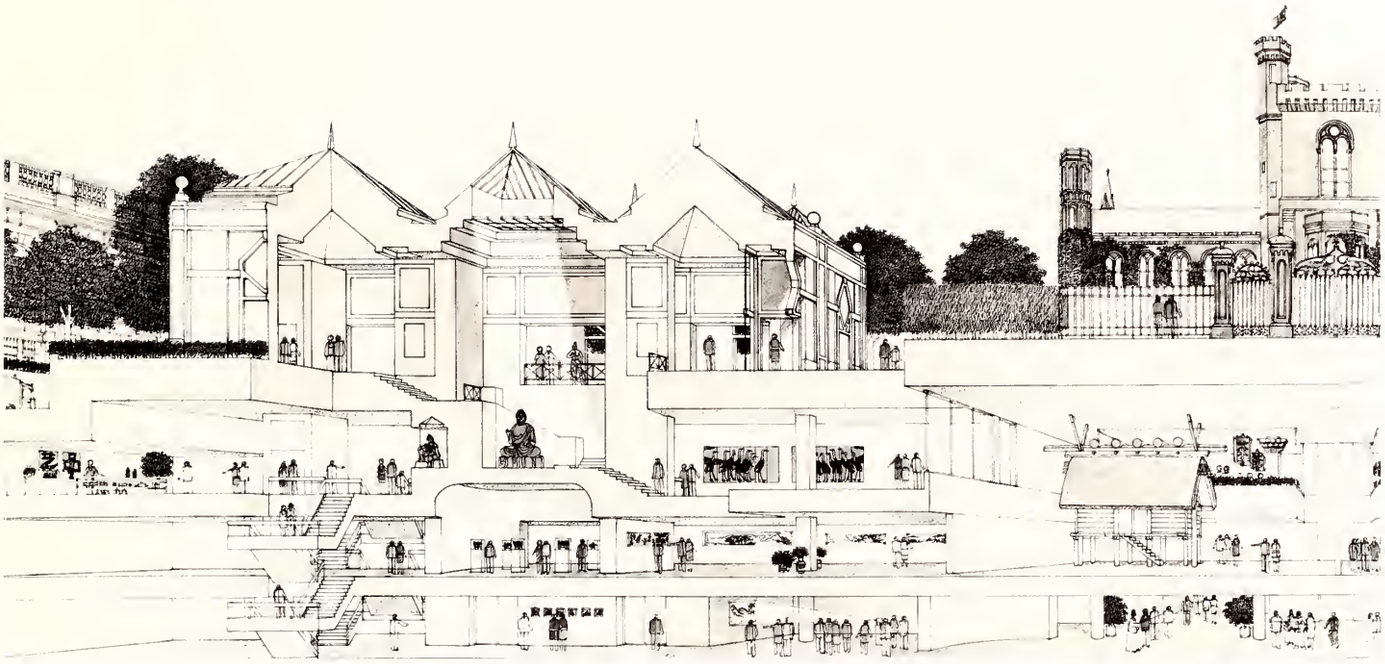


Fig. 30 Detail, cross-section view of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, showing relationship between the above-ground pavilion and the underground facilities. Reproduced by permission of Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott.

Carlhian designed the Sackler pavilion as a rectangular granite structure with six copper pyramids to echo the articulated roofline of the nearby Smithsonian Castle and Arts and Industries buildings. The interior of the pavilion was finished in limestone, and, in one of Carlhian's most inspired decisions, a central, skylit stairway brightens what might otherwise be an oppressive descent into the exhibition areas. Construction of the new museum began in 1982 and was completed in the spring of 1987.

In selecting objects from Dr. Sackler's Asian collections, Lawton — who, in 1982, was named founding director of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery while continuing to serve as director of the Freer Gallery — proposed that the Smithsonian focus on three major areas: Chinese bronzes, Chinese jades, and ancient West Asian metalwork. Despite this concentration, the sheer number of objects owned by Dr. Sackler complicated the selection process. Museum specialists were determined to choose pieces that would complement the Freer collection. While the Freer Chinese ritual bronzes are justly famous for their outstanding quality, they represent a limited stylistic and geographic range. By contrast, the Chinese bronzes selected from Sackler's holdings provide a wide-ranging panorama of styles from provincial centers all over China. The inaugural exhibition at the Sackler Gallery presented all 153 Chinese bronzes donated by Sackler. Among the finest of the Sackler Chinese bronzes is a Shang dynasty ritual wine vessel, type *you*, formerly in the collection of Alexandrine de Rothschild (fig.31). When sold at auction in London on May 16, 1967, it fetched the equivalent of $106,400,

Fig. 31. Ritual wine container, type *you,* China, Shang dynasty, 13th century B.C., bronze; 30.1 x 12.2 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, gift of Arthur M. Sackler S87.23

a world auction record for a Chinese bronze at the time.[135]

Although Sackler provided appraisals for most objects in his collection, some of the most famous pieces arrived without any indication of their market value. A bronze ritual food container, type *gui,* was in that category (fig. 32).[136] During a meeting with Dr. Sackler, Lawton expressed his concern that the Smithsonian had reached the fifty-million-dollar limit and that many important objects, including the *gui,* remained to be selected for the new museum. Without a moment's hesitation, Sackler smiled, patted Lawton's arm reassuringly, and said, "Take whatever you want." The final count of the Sackler donation numbered 1,008 objects.

Contrary to Freer's wishes that no object from his collection was to

Fig. 32. Ritual food container, type *gui*, China, Shang dynasty, 12th–11th century B.C., bronze, 16.2 x 29.2 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, gift of Arthur M. Sackler S87.51. The thirty-six character inscription inside the vessel is one of the most important dating from the late Shang period.

leave the building and only objects in the Freer collection could be displayed in the gallery, Dr. Sackler made it clear that he hoped it would be possible for the museum named for him to play an active role, nationally and internationally, by lending and borrowing Asian art. In that sense, the activities of the Freer and Sackler galleries are complementary, enabling the Smithsonian to carry out more effectively its mission to increase and diffuse knowledge.

Throughout his career, beginning as an undergraduate, Dr. Sackler was involved in editing and publishing scholarly journals. One of his most successful publications is the *Medical Tribune*, a weekly newspaper he founded and for which he wrote a regular column.[137] Beginning in 1983, Dr. Sackler began to provide funds for the publication of *Artibus Asiae*, among the best-known international journals devoted to Asian art history.[138] In 1991 the Museum Rietberg in Zurich and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery assumed sponsorship of the journal.[139] Alexander C. Soper edited *Artibus Asiae* for thirty-five years, longer than any previous incumbent. Lawton worked closely with Soper on technical matters relating to the journal and, in 1993, succeeded Soper as editor of *Artibus Asiae*.

After the Sackler Gallery opened in September 1987, Lawton resigned as director of the Freer and Sackler galleries. In 1993, to celebrate the reopening of the Freer Gallery after five years of extensive renovation, which coincided with the seventieth anniversary of the gallery, Lawton collaborated with Linda Merrill, curator of American art, in writing *Freer: A Legacy of Art*.

Milo Cleveland Beach
Sixth Director of the Freer Gallery of Art, since 1988
Second Director of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, since 1988

A distinguished scholar of South and Southeast Asian art, particularly well known for his research on Indian painting, Milo Beach received his baccalaureate and doctoral degrees from Harvard University in 1962 and 1969 respectively (fig. 33). From 1964 to 1966, he served as acting curator of Asiatic art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, a position once held by John Ellerton Lodge. Beach was appointed assistant curator at Harvard University's Fogg Art Museum in 1967, interrupting his duties for a year-long stay in India as a junior fellow at the American Institute of Indian Studies. In 1969 he joined the faculty of Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts. During his tenure at Williams College, Beach maintained a vital interest in museum activities and was instrumental in shaping the early development of the Indian collection at the Williams College Museum of Art. Mughal painting has been the main focus of Beach's research for most of his career, and he has given special attention to the exploration of naturalism by early seventeenth-century artists. Beach investigated this theme fully in 1978, when he organized the exhibition *The Grand Mogul: Imperial Painting in India, 1600–1669.*[140]

Fig. 33. Milo Cleveland Beach, sixth director of the Freer Gallery of Art and second director of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery. Photograph by Kim Nielsen

Beach's first affiliation with the Smithsonian came in 1981, when, as a Smithsonian Regent's Fellow, he was in charge of *The Imperial Image: Paintings for the Mughal Court.*[141] The exhibition at the Freer Gallery examined paintings made under the patronage of the Mughal emperors of India during the years from 1560 through 1640. His catalogue was the first published study of the gallery's important collection of Mughal manuscripts, which includes examples Charles Lang Freer purchased as early as 1907 from Colonel Henry Bathhurst Hanna, a British officer who had served in the Indian army. In 1983 the Freer Gallery published *The Adventures of Rama,* Beach's adaptation of the Ramayana, India's ancient Hindu epic. Beach interpreted the classic tale in a popular style intended for young people and illustrated it with paintings from the museum's sixteenth-century manuscript.[142]

The agreement between Dr. Sackler and the Smithsonian Institution required that an assistant director be appointed for the Sackler Gallery, and Milo Beach was appointed to that position in 1984. Beach's extensive museum and academic experience made him the logical person for the position, and he immediately assumed a key role in planning the inaugural

Fig. 34. Henri Vever (1854–1942) painting en plein air, ca. 1895. Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives

installation, in hiring staff members, and in organizing public programs for the Sackler Gallery. One of his first tasks was to work closely with the gallery's Publications Department in preparing the catalogue *Asian Art in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery: The Inaugural Gift* and in establishing *Asian Art,* the quarterly journal published by the gallery in collaboration with Oxford University Press.[143]

As Beach was planning the opening of the Sackler Gallery, he remained alert to opportunities for making important additions to the collection. He soon experienced the kind of unexpected good fortune that most curators only dream about. Specialists in Indian and Persian painting have always considered as highly important the manuscripts assembled in the early decades of the twentieth century by Henri Vever, the French jeweler and art collector (fig. 34). Vever had lent a few items to the international exhibition of Persian and Indian paintings held at the Musée des arts Décoratifs in Paris in 1912[144] — the first major exhibition devoted entirely to the arts of the book — and to the exhibition of Persian paintings held at Burlington House in London in 1931.[145] Most of his collection, however, had never been shown publicly. When Vever died in 1942, in the middle of the Second World War, his Indian and Persian manuscripts disappeared, and it was generally assumed that they had been destroyed. For more than forty years, despite occasional speculation about Vever's collection, nothing was known about its location. Then, as the result of a totally serendipitous sequence of events, the Vever collection reappeared and, even more unexpected, Beach acquired it for the Sackler Gallery.

The first inkling of the whereabouts of Vever's large collection of paintings came at a dinner party in Paris in November 1984. Laure Lowry, mother of Glenn D. Lowry, then curator of Near Eastern art at the Sackler Gallery, happened to mention to the gentleman seated next to her that her son was a curator at the Smithsonian and that he was particularly interested in Indian and Persian painting. With equal casualness, the gentleman, François Mautin, replied that he had inherited a large collection of Indian and Persian manuscripts from his grandfather and suggested to Mrs. Lowry that her son might possibly want to see it. Fortunately for the Sackler Gallery, Mrs. Lowry remembered the conversation and, when she repeated Mautin's comments about his grandfather's collection, Glenn Lowry immediately suspected it might be the one assembled by Vever.

Beach and Lowry corresponded with Mautin and, early in 1985, the three met in Paris. During their discussions, Mautin assured Beach and

Lowry that the Vever collection was still intact. Contrary to rumor, the collection had been shipped to the United States just before the outbreak of the Second World War and placed in storage in New York.[146] Although Mautin had not considered selling his grandfather's collection, he agreed to having an inventory and appraisal made of the manuscripts and paintings. When Beach and Lowry finally studied the collection in February 1985, they found a great many previously unknown manuscripts and realized that Vever's holdings were even more important than they had envisaged. In April Secretary of the Smithsonian Robert McCormick Adams and Dr. Sackler saw the collection in London, where it had been taken for the inventory and appraisal. Both men enthusiastically supported the effort to purchase the manuscripts for the Sackler Gallery. Fearful that other museums might learn about the reappearance of Vever's Indian and Persian manuscripts and thwart the Smithsonian's efforts to obtain them, Beach and Lowry stressed the need for secrecy during their negotiations. After much discussion, Mautin finally agreed to sell the collection to the Smithsonian. Even though it would have been more profitable for Mautin to dispose of the manuscripts individually, through dealers or at auction, he was more concerned that the collection be kept intact and that it be housed in the new Sackler Gallery in Washington. Secretary Adams referred to the Vever collection as "perhaps the most important acquisition in the history of the Smithsonian Institution."[147]

Fig. 35 Milo Cleveland Beach and Glenn D. Lowry with one of the Vever Mughal paintings, *Jahangir with Courtiers*, ca. 1650, from the Late Shāh Jāhan Album. India, Mughal period, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 25.5 x 20.1 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, purchase — Smithsonian Unrestricted Trust Funds, and Foreign Collections Acquisitions Program, in honor of Arthur M. Sackler, S86.0407

To celebrate the reappearance of the Vever collection, in 1986 Beach and Lowry selected 160 of the finest Indian and Persian paintings, manuscripts, calligraphies, and bookbindings — from the almost five hundred items that had been acquired — for the exhibition *A Jeweler's Eye: Islamic Arts of the Book from the Vever Collection,* held in 1988 (fig. 35).[148] For the first time in half a century the public had an opportunity to see some of those famous works, and every facet of the installation, including display cases and gallery architectural elements, alluded to the art nouveau style popular during the period when Vever was assembling his collection. In the course of the festivities accompanying the exhibition, a reporter asked Lowry what his mother's reward was for having played such an important role in finding the Vever collection. His response was, "Eternal gratitude."[149]

When Lawton resigned as director of the Freer and Sackler galleries in late 1987, Beach was named acting director and subsequently was appointed director of both galleries. In addition to supervising the activities of the Sackler Gallery, he also took charge of the extensive renovation

of the Freer Gallery. Major aspects of that renovation, which necessitated the closing of the museum for five years, included conservation of Whistler's Peacock Room and installation of a new lighting system in the galleries. Most critical were the excavation techniques employed to support the solid masonry foundation of the Freer building while soil was removed from beneath the gallery's central courtyard to provide much-needed storage facilities.

Most of the funding for the Freer renovation came from federal appropriations, but private donors also participated in the project. Contributions from members of the Meyer family made possible the complete redesign of the Freer auditorium.[150] In recognition of those contributions and of the close relationship between the Freer Gallery and the Meyer family throughout the history of the museum, the auditorium was named in honor of Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer.[151] As early as February 1924 chamber music recitals had been held in the Freer auditorium, but John Ellerton Lodge, an informed critic, noted that the acoustics were not suitable for musical programs.[152] The sophisticated electronic equipment and acoustical panels installed in the renovated Meyer Auditorium enabled Beach to introduce a variety of performances, including a concert series in memory of Dr. Eugene Meyer III and Mary Adelaide Bradley Meyer.[153]

Not the least of Beach's accomplishments have been his efforts to organize the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Sackler Gallery and the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Freer Gallery. With all the skill and aplomb of an accomplished juggler, he has continued to direct the Smithsonian's two Asian museums, guide the planning for the two celebrations, and plan developments for the twenty-first century.

Asia will exert increasingly greater influence during the new century, making an understanding of Asian art and culture even more important. Because of the contributions of everyone associated with the Freer and Sackler galleries, beginning with the two founders, Charles Lang Freer and Arthur M. Sackler, and including the directors, curators, and support staff, the two museums will continue to play a steadily larger role in the increase and diffusion of knowledge of Asian art and culture.

NOTES

Unless otherwise stated, unpublished material is in the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

1. Information on Charles Lang Freer is provided by Thomas Lawton and Linda Merrill, *Freer: A Legacy of Art* (Washington, D.C.and New York: Freer Gallery of Art in association with Harry N. Abrams, 1993). See also Helen Nebeker Tomlinson, "Charles Lang Freer: Pioneer Collector of Oriental Art," 4 vols. (Ph.D. diss., Case Western Reserve University, 1979).

2. For a comprehensive analysis of the Peacock Room, see Linda Merrill, *The Peacock Room: A Cultural Biography* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art in association with Yale University Press, 1998).

3. Mary Cassatt to Lousine Havemeyer, June 2, 1906, quoted in Frances Weitzenhoffer, *The Havemeyers: Impressionism Comes to America* (New York: Abrams, 1986), p. 169.

4. Charles Lang Freer to John Ellerton Lodge, June 4, 1919.

5. For accounts of John Ellerton Lodge's career, see *The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (New York: White, 1945), 32:409; Walter Muir Whitehill, "John Ellerton Lodge," in *Dictionary of American Biography*, Supp 3, *1941–1945* (New York: Scribner's, 1973), pp. 464–65.

6. Writing to George Otto Trevelyan on August 30, 1918, Henry Cabot Lodge (1850–1924) described Nahant as "a narrow peninsula 'thrust out into the open ocean, with nothing between it and Portugal, all rocks.'" Quoted in John A. Garraty, *Henry Cabot Lodge: A Biography* (New York: Knopf, 1953), p. 6.

7. Alden Hatch, *The Lodges of Massachusetts* (New York: Hawthorn, 1973), p. 82.

8. Ernest Samuels, *Henry Adams: Selected Letters* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, Belknap Press, 1992), p. 115.

9. In 1951 Mary Catherine Lodge (1882–1971), John Ellerton Lodge's widow, donated to the New England Conservatory 175 music scores, including two manuscript scores by the British composer and poet John Lodge Ellerton (1801–1873). Jean A. Morrow, director of libraries, New England Conservatory, to Thomas Lawton, May 24, 1991.

10. Lodge dedicated his music to Joseph Trumbell Stickney (1874–1904), a close friend.

11. For an introduction to Freer's biblical manuscripts, see Henry A. Sanders, *The Old Testament Manuscripts in the Freer Collection*, part 1, *The Washington Manuscript of Deuteronomy and Joshua* (New York: Macmillan, 1910).

12. Henry Cabot Lodge, *Early Memories* (New York: Scribner's, 1913), p. 22, described his father — John Ellerton Lodge's grandfather: "for my father was a China merchant, and, after the fashion of the merchants of those days, had his office in the granite block which stretched down to the end of Commercial Wharf. His counting-room was at the very end in the last division of the block, and from the windows I could look out on the ships lying alongside the wharf. They were beautiful vessels, American clipper ships in the days when our ships of that type were famous throughout the world for speed and stanchness."

13. Akiko Murakata, "Selected Letters of Dr. William Sturgis Bigelow" (Ph.D. diss., George Washington University, 1971), esp. pp. 158, 168, 292, presents information on the lifelong close friendship between Henry Cabot Lodge and his family with William Sturgis Bigelow. See also Murakata Akiko, "Nihon bijutsu no Onjin: Bigerō ryakuden" (Brief biography of Bigelow: An early collector of Far Eastern art), *Kobijutsu*, no. 35 (December 1971): 57–69; John W. Crowley, "Eden off Nantucket: W. S. Bigelow and 'Tuckanuck,'" *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 109 (1973): 3–8.

14. See Murakata, "Selected Letters," pp. 294, 307. When Bigelow died in 1926, it was John Ellerton Lodge, who in accord with Bigelow's specific request, wrapped Bigelow's body in his Buddhist robes. See Roger Lipsey, *Coomaraswamy: His Life and Work*, Bollingen Series 89 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977), 3:257; Walter Muir Whitehill, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: A Centennial History*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, Belknap Press, 1970), vol. 1.

15. *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin* 10, no. 60 (December 1912): 48; Whitehill, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, 1:1–116; Julia Meech and Gabriel P. Weisberg, *Japonisme Comes to America: The Japanese Impact on the Graphic Arts, 1876–1925* (New York: Abrams, 1990), p. 52.

16. For information regarding Okakura Kakuzō (1862–1913), see *Okakura Tenshin zenshū* (Works by Okakura Tenshin), 9 vols. (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1981); Nakamura Sunao, ed., *Okakura Kakuzō: Collected English Writings*, 3 vols. (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1984); Horioka Yasuko, *Okakura Tenshin kō* (A study on Okakura Tenshin) (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1982); Yasuko Horioka, *The Life of Kakuzō* (Tokyo: Hokuseido, 1963).

17. Langdon Warner, "The Weld Bequest: Paintings," *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* 9, no. 52 (August 1911): 34–36.

18. For information regarding Ernest Fenollosa (1853–1908), see Lawrence W. Chisolm, *Fenollosa: The Far East and American Culture* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1963);Yamaguchi Seiichi, *Fenollosa: Nihon bunka no senyō ni sasageta isshō* (Fenollosa: A life devoted to the advocacy of Japanese culture) (Tokyo: Sanseido, 1982).

19. "Sometime in the spring of 1906, the trustees of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston asked President [Charles Wilson] Eliot of Harvard University to designate two young men who might be trained for museum work in the Department of Asiatic Art. The names he suggested were those of John E. Lodge, who eventually became the first director of the Freer Gallery, and Langdon Warner." Theodore Bowie, ed., *Langdon Warner Through His Letters* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966), p. 16.

20. "On August 26 Mr. Okakura left to spend a year in Japan and China. . . . During his absence . . . Mr. Langdon Warner is in charge of sculpture and prints; and the paintings are in the care of Mr. John E. Lodge, who has been appointed Associate in the Department." "Notes," *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* 9, no. 53 (October 1911): 50.

21. *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* 11, no. 75 (December 1913): 72–75.

22. Umehara Sueji (1893–1983) describes the ambience in the Department of Chinese and Japanese Art during Lodge's curatorship in his article, "Roji shi no kotodamo" (Reminiscences of Mr. Lodge), *Techō*, no. 1 (1947): 29-41.

23. Freer to Lodge, January 4, 1916. For additional details, see Tomlinson, "Freer," 4:676–77, 689 n. 47.

24. Agnes E. Meyer (1887–1970) records her relationship with Freer and his collection in "Charles Freer and His Gallery," *Washington Post*, January 11, 1970, sec. M, pp. 1, 6–7. For a discussion of Eugene Meyer (1875–1959) and his relationship with Freer, see Merlo J. Pusey, *Eugene Meyer* (New York: Knopf, 1974). Agnes Meyer's autobiography, *Out of These Roots: The Autobiography of an American Woman*

(Boston: Little, Brown, 1953), gives a vivid description of the vitality and determination that guided her activities.

25. Freer to Agnes E. Meyer, October 2, 1917. For the provenance of the Chinese sculpture, see Tomlinson, "Freer," 4:676–77, 689 n. 47.

26. Notes taken by Katharine Nash Rhoades in Freer's suite at the Gotham Hotel, May 14, 1919.

27. For a discussion of Katharine Nash Rhoades's artistic career, see H. Nichols B. Clark, in *Avant-garde Painting and Sculpture in America, 1910–25*, ed. William Innes Homer (Wilmington: Delaware Art Museum, 1975), p. 118.

28. Katharine Rhoades had some reservations, expressing concern that Lodge might prove to be "pesky" and lean toward "intellectual frigidity." Both women, however, feared that unless they strongly supported a candidate for director, Secretary Charles Walcott (1850–1927) might select someone of his own choice and, with the support of the Smithsonian's trustees, succeed in having him confirmed. See letters of Katharine Nash Rhoades, February 3, 7, and 10, 1920, Agnes E. Meyer Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division.

29. *Annual Report: Smithsonian Institution* (Washington, D.C., 1920), p. 138.

30. Lodge to Rhoades, June 9, 1920.

31. Lodge to Walcott, March 2, 1923.

32. Lodge to Rhoades, April 13, 1921. To appreciate Lodge's influence in setting the style of Freer installations, which he had evolved at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, see the photographs of the Chinese sculpture and painting galleries in Whitehill, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, 1:479

33. Lodge to Guest, July 24, 1931.

34. Lodge to Walcott, January 27, 1922.

35. Walcott to Lodge, February 9, 1922.

36. Lodge wrote a brief report of the activities of the expedition to China in the *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* 23, no. 138 (August 1925): 37–41. Some funding for the expedition came from the Museum of Fine Arts. In his 1927 report to Secretary Walcott, Lodge comments on the expenses involved: "$96,996.48 for the China Expedition, after deducting the contribution of $30,000 made by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts."

37. Lodge initially cabled Bishop that the funds available to purchase some of the Xinzheng bronzes — specifically, the globular jar and tall vases he had seen in photographs provided by Bishop — could not exceed forty thousand dollars. Lodge also encouraged Bishop to acquire any inscribed pieces. Several days later, after consultation with United States government officials, Lodge again contacted Bishop and told him it would not be consistent with the policies of the gallery to acquire any of the Xinzheng bronzes. Bishop subsequently published photographs of the bronzes in two articles about the Xinzheng find: "The Bronzes of Hsin-Chêng Hsien," *Chinese Social and Political Science Review* 8, no. 2 (April 1924): 1–19; and "The Find at Hsin-Chêng Hsien," *Artibus Asiae* 3, no. 1 (1928): 110–21. Although some Xinzheng bronzes were dispersed and are now in collections outside China, many are housed in the Museum of History in Taiwan.

38. The first 1929 season at Anyang lasted from March 3 through May 7; the second season was divided into two periods, one lasting October 7–21 and the second November 15–December 12. Li prepared English-language reports on the archaeological work at Anyang, copies of which are in the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Archives.

39. Rhoades to Lodge, September 25, 1921.

40. Paul Pelliot (1878–1945), the eminent French sinologist, was turned away in the fall of 1921: "He [Pelliot] was sorry not to see the Freer collection — but made no effort to — and seemed to understand." Rhoades to Lodge, October 3, 1921. And, "Had I been at the Freer Gallery when Pelliot called there, I rather think I should have let him in, and so I told him. Nevertheless, Miss Guest was quite right to keep him out, as I should not want him to get in unless I too could be there, — or you." Lodge to Rhoades, October 14, 1921.

41. Lodge to Rhoades, September 11, 1920.

42. Lodge to Walcott, December 11, 1922.

43. "The recent work of Mr. Lodge in the Freer Museum at Washington, in changing the period to which Mr. Freer had tentatively assigned his paintings and in changing some pictures from the artist whose names they bore either as signatures or on labels, to some other artist, must have been based upon a profound knowledge of Chinese books if it is to prove of any value. It is more probable that the changes have been made on the basis of personal taste and we suggest that this is even not as reliable as the original signatures or labels which were placed there by persons who were probably more familiar with the works and style of the Chinese painters as recorded in Chinese literature, than Mr. Lodge." John C. Ferguson, *China Journal of Science and Arts* 4, no. 4 (April 1926): 164–65.

44. Freer was so proud of the 1,829 cm (sixty foot)-long handscroll that he had the English scholar Laurence Binyon (1869–1943) write an essay about it. *Ma Yüan's Landscape Scroll in the Freer Collection* (New York: Privately printed, 1916).

45. The information provided by the dealer C. T. Loo (1880–1957) stated that the reliefs came from the Yungang caves near Datong, Shanxi Province, and dated to the Northern Wei dynasty (386–535). They are now known to be from the Xiangtangshan caves in Hebei Province and to date from the Northern Qi dynasty (550–77).

46. Lodge had emphasized quality in his role as curator at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. See Jan Fontein and Pratapaditya Pal, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: Oriental Arts* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1969), p. 5; Jan Fontein, "Berthold Laufer and the Case of the Inscribed Sarcophagus," *Journal of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* 5 (1993): 4–23.

47. Lodge to Walcott, October 15, 1925.

48. Walcott to Lodge, November 16, 1926.

49. Lodge to Walcott, December 18, 1926.

50. Lodge to Walcott, January 20, 1927.

51. Meyer, "Freer and His Gallery."

52. Lodge to Abbot, April 14, 1927.

53. *Material Papers Relating to the Freer Gift and Bequest* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1928).

54. *Report of the Law Committee of the Board of Regents Appointed to Consider Material Papers Relating to the Freer Gift and Bequest* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1929).

55. Apparently Lodge's decision to leave the Museum of Fine Arts was prompted, in part, by concerns expressed by some trustees that a conflict of interest might arise in deciding which objects should be acquired by the Freer Gallery and which by the Museum of Fine Arts. Lodge described his decision in two letters to Grace Dunham Guest, July 9 and July 17, 1931. The announcement of Lodge's resignation appeared in the *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* 29, no. 174 (August 1931): 73.

56. John Ellerton Lodge, "An Exhibition of Japanese Costume," *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* 9, no. 54 (December 1911): 59.

57. Reference to being "a student of comparative religion" appears in Lodge's letter to Rhoades, July 28, 1920. Lodge's articles on Buddhism include, "The Buddha of

Measureless Light and the Land of Bliss," *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* 24, no. 141 (February 1926): 1–10; and "A Note on Two Chinese Buddhist Dedicatory Groups," *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* 26, no. 156 (August 1928): 57–60.

58. *A Descriptive and Illustrative Catalogue of Chinese Bronzes Acquired During the Administration of John Ellerton Lodge* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1946).

59. Lodge to Rhoades, October 10, 1923.

60. Leigh Ashton, *An Introduction to the Study of Chinese Sculpture* (London: Benn, 1924). Ashton (1897–1983) also published a brief comment about the objects displayed in the Freer Gallery's inaugural exhibition, "The Opening Exhibition at the Freer Gallery, Washington," *Jahrbuch der asiatischen Kunst* 1 (1924): 239–40. Ashton was associated with the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, throughout his career, eventually becoming director (1945–55). When Ashton died in 1983, the obituary in the *London Times* read, in part, "he was temperamentally unsympathetic to academic scholarship; and the signal success of his administration was due not to specialized knowledge but to a wide range of sympathetic response." *London Times,* March 17, 1983, p. 14.

61. Obituaries include, by Richard Ettinghausen, "In Memoriam: John Ellerton Lodge," *Ars Islamica* 9 (1942): 239–40; *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* 41, no. 243 (February 1943): 10; *American Journal of Archaeology* (May/June 1943): 228.

62. Édouard Chavannes, *Mission archéologique dans la Chine septentrionale* (Paris: Leroux, 1909–15).

63. "In everything he touched Chavannes had established and maintained an austere standard of accurate translation, of attention to philological detail, and a consciousness of the overall concept of his subject matter that made him the first truly modern sinologue." Dennis C. Twitchett, introduction to *China in Antiquity* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1978), p. xvi.

64. Archibald G. Wenley, "The Hsin-Chêng Bronzes," *China Journal of Science and Arts* 3, no. 3 (1924): 137.

65. Archibald G. Wenley, *The Grand Empress Dowager Wên Ming and the Northern Wei Necropolis at Fang Shan,* Freer Gallery of Art, Occasional Papers, vol. 1, no. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1947). J. J. L. Duyvendak corrected some of Wenley's Chinese translations. See his review in *T'oung Pao* 38 (1948): 308-13. The mausoleum at Fangshan was never used; the Grand Empress Dowager Wenming was buried near Luoyang, Henan Province. See W. J. R. Jenner, *Memories of Loyang: Yang Hsüan-chih and the Lost Capital (493–534)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 27 n. 39.

66. Wenley described some portions of his tour of Shaanxi in "Some Shensi Monuments," *Chinese Social and Political Science Review* 8, no. 4 (1924): 106–15.

67. John A. Pope, "Archibald Gibson Wenley: An Appreciation," *Ars Orientalis* 5 (1963): 2.

68. A memorandum from Waldo G. Leland, chairman of the Committee on the Conservation of Cultural Resources, May 29, 1941, invited Lodge to a meeting on June 4, "for the purpose of considering a cooperative program for the protection of the libraries, archives, and museums of the Federal Government and of the District of Columbia, located within the District of Columbia, from eventual hazards of war."

69. Lodge to Abbot, June 12, 1941. In his letter, Lodge mentions that he had attended a meeting of the Committee on the Conservation of Cultural Resources of the National Resources Planning Board that left him "with the impression that it will be the business of the National Resources Planning Board to get money from Congress for the war-time protection of the contents of Government museums and libraries." Lodge goes on to say that as of June 4, 1941, "there seemed to be no definite plans, no definite estimates, and no definite organization for carrying either of these extremely general ideas into effect, and since the business of protecting the Government collections of art, science, etc., seems to me pressing, I have prepared plans and specifications for a bomb-proof vault under the Freer Gallery Court, and have had the construction costs estimated by a competent contractor."

70. Early in 1942 Secretary Charles Abbot (1892–1973) appointed a War Committee "for the purpose of exploiting every facility of the Institution in aiding the war effort." See *Annual Report: Smithsonian Institution* (Washington, D.C., 1942), pp. 1–4. The Smithsonian eventually used existing storage facilities in Virginia for its most precious objects. I am grateful to Timothy Carr of the Smithsonian Institution Libraries at the National Postal Museum for his willingness to discuss his research on the activities of the institution during the Second World War and for information included in his lecture, "Rare Books and Air Raids." Pamela Henson, a historian in the Institutional History Division of the Office of Smithsonian Archives, discusses the Smithsonian's wartime activities in her book, *The Smithsonian Goes to War: The Increase and Diffusion of Scientific Knowledge in the Pacific* (forthcoming).

71. Umehara, "Roji shi no kotodamo."

72. Wenley wrote about the exhibition and his role in the selection of objects in the *Bulletin van de vereeniging van vrienden der Aziatische kunst,* 3d ser., 1 (June 1953): 7–12.

73. *Material Papers Relating to the Freer Gift and Bequest,* p. 11.

74. The editorial in the inaugural issue stated, "With the present issue *Ars Islamica* enters the international family of art periodicals and hopes to be given an encouraging reception. The principal aim which its publishers — The Research Seminary in Islamic Art, Division of Fine Arts, University of Michigan, and the Detroit Institute of Arts — set before themselves is to promote an interest in the study of Islamic Art."

75. For biographical information about Richard Ettinghausen, together with a bibliography, see Oleg Grabar, "Richard Ettinghausen," *Artibus Asiae* 41, no. 4 (1979): 281–84; Priscilla P. Soucek and Diane M. Nelson, "Richard Ettinghausen (1906–1979)," *Archives of Asian Art* 33 (1980): 111–13.

76. Although the date of Freer's birth is given as February 25, 1856, in most early documents in the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Archives, the entry in the Freer family Bible, and the inscription on Freer's tombstone indicate that he actually was born two years earlier, on February 25, 1854.

77. Rhoades to Wenley, January 27, 1955.

78. Wenley to Rhoades, July 15, 1955. "Cabot" refers to Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. (1902–1985), nephew of John Ellerton Lodge.

79. Although Wenley was still director at the time of the second medal presentation, on May 3, 1960, to the Islamic scholar Ernst Kühnel (1882–1964) of Berlin, he was so ill from his long struggle with cancer that Richard Ettinghausen participated in the ceremony on his behalf. By the time of the third presentation, on September 15, 1965, to the distinguished Japanese scholar Yashiro Yukio (1890–1975), John Pope had succeeded Wenley as director. In 1973, as part of the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Freer Gallery, three presentations were made, to

Tanaka Ichimatsu (1895–1983) of Japan; to Laurence Sickman (1906–1988), then director of the Nelson-Atkins Gallery of Art, Kansas City, Missouri; and to Roman Ghirshman (1895–1979) of Paris, for his achievements in the field of Iranian art. Harold P. Stern, then director, presided at the ceremonies. Thomas Lawton was director on May 2, 1983, when the seventh recipient of the medal was Max Loehr (1903–1988) of Harvard University and when Stella Kramrisch (1898–1993), the noted Indian scholar, was the eighth recipient in 1985. Milo C. Beach, then director, presented the ninth Freer Medal to Alexander C. Soper (1904–1993) on January 11, 1989. Beach traveled to Professor Soper's home in Rosemont, Pennsylvania, because the recipient was uncertain his health would permit him to make the trip to Washington, D.C.

80. Ron Spronk, "The Early Years of Conservation at the Fogg Museum: Four Pioneers," *Harvard University Art Museums Review* 6, no. 1 (Fall 1996): 5, 8.

81. Gettens collaborated with George Stout on *Painting Materials: A Short Encyclopedia* (New York: Van Nostrand, 1942); and, with Bertha M. Usilton, librarian of the Freer Gallery, he compiled *Abstracts of Technical Studies in Art and Archaeology, 1943–1952* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1955).

82. Rutherford John Gettens, *Technical Studies*, vol. 2 of *The Freer Chinese Bronzes* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1969). The volume is dedicated to Archibald Gibson Wenley.

83. Gettens's obituary and bibliography appear in *Ars Orientalis* 10 (1975): 195–205. The following issue of *Ars Orientalis* 11 (1979) was dedicated to Gettens.

84. Chase presented his findings in numerous books and articles. For example, see "Bronze Casting in China: A Short Technical History," in *The Great Bronze Age of China: A Symposium*, ed. George Kuwayama (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1983), pp. 100–123; *Ancient Chinese Bronze Art: Casting the Precious Sacral Vessel* (New York: China Institute in America, 1991).

85. Kinoshita's full-time appointment began on October 28, 1932.

86. Archibald Gibson Wenley, "A *Hsi Tsun* from the Avery Brundage Collection," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* 6 (1952): 41–43.

87. Archibald Gibson Wenley, "The Appearance of a Fourth *Ta tso tsu ting* as Proven by the Inscriptions," in *Akten des vierundzwanzigsten internationalen Orientalisten-Kongresses München, 28. August bis 4. September 1957* (Wiesbaden: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, 1959), pp. 632–33. For the Freer tripod, see John Alexander Pope et al., *Catalogue*, vol. 1 of *The Freer Chinese Bronzes* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1967), pp. 190–95.

88. Archibald Gibson Wenley, "'A Spray of Bamboo,' by Wu Chên," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* 8 (1954): 7–9; Wenley, "*Clearing Autumn Skies over Mountains and Valleys*, Attributed to Kuo Hsi," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* 10 (1956): 30–41; Wenley, "'A Breath of Spring,' by Tsou Fu-lei," *Ars Orientalis* 2 (1957): 459–69.

89. Lawton and Merrill, *Freer*, p. 116, figs. 81–82.

90. James F. Cahill, "Wu Chen: A Chinese Landscapist and Bamboo Painter of the Fourteenth Century" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1958).

91. James F. Cahill, *Chinese Painting* (Lausanne: Skira, 1960).

92. In addition to making copious notes in the gallery's files, Cahill published several articles about paintings in the collection: "Ch'ien Hsüan and His Figure Paintings," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* 12 (1958): 11–29; "The Return of the Absent Servants: Chou Fang's *Double Sixes* Restored," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* 15 (1961): 26–28; *Chinese Album Leaves in the Freer Gallery of Art* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1961); "Yüan Chiang and His School," *Ars Orientalis* 5 (1963): 259-72; 6 (1966): 191–212.

93. Pope, "Wenley," p. 3.

94. James F. Cahill wrote the obituary of Wenley published in *Artibus Asiae* 25, nos. 2–3 (1962): 197–98; John Alexander Pope wrote the obituary and prepared the bibliography that appeared in *Ars Orientalis* 5 (1963): 1–5. That same number of *Ars Orientalis* was published as a memorial volume for Wenley. Richard Ettinghausen prepared the obituary for the *Cosmos Club Bulletin* 16, nos. 2–3 (February 1963): 2–4.

95. A. G. Wenley and John A. Pope, *China* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1944). The Smithsonian Institution War Background Studies, begun in the summer of 1942, was planned "for the purpose of making available authentic information on the less well-known areas and peoples involved in the war." *Annual Report: Smithsonian Institution* (Washington, D.C., 1943), p. 11.

96. Pope's preliminary report on the *Topkapu Sarayı Müzesi* collection appears as a "Letter from the Near East," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 13 (1950): 558-64.

97. John A. Pope, *Fourteenth-Century Blue-and-White: A Group of Chinese Porcelains in the Topkapu Sarayı Müzesi, Istanbul*, Freer Gallery of Art, Occasional Papers, vol. 2, no. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1952).

98. John A. Pope, *Chinese Porcelains from the Ardebil Shrine* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1956). According to the preface to the second edition, published by Sotheby Parke Bernet in 1978, "On the whole, the general outline of the characteristics of blue-and-white from the fourteenth century through Ming has stood up as it was set forth in the first edition of the book."

99. Sotheby's, London, auction catalogue, October 29, 1957, lot 166, where the piece is identified as the property of Mrs. Clare de Pinna. The canteen fetched twenty-five hundred pounds, the highest price at the sale. See Margaret Medley, "At the Sales," *Oriental Art*, n.s., 4, no. 1 (Spring 1958): 31. The gallery purchased the canteen from John Sparks in 1958. See also John A. Pope, "An Early Ming Porcelain in Muslim Style," in *Aus der Welt der islamischen Kunst* (Berlin: Mann, 1959), pp. 357–75.

100. Pope described the bowl in *The History of Ming Porcelain* (London: Oriental Ceramic Society, 1971), p. 14.

101. W. Percival Yetts, *The Cull Chinese Bronzes* (London: University of London, 1939).

102. A third volume, to be devoted to a study of the bronze inscriptions by Noel Barnard, was never published.

103. See *Manila Trade Pottery Seminar* (Manila: Research Foundation in Philippine Anthropology and Archaeology, 1968).

104. Pope provides a personal assessment of the exhibition in "Chinese Art Treasures Cross the Pacific," *Connoisseur* 147, no. 594 (May 1961): 230–40.

105. Pope's lecture delivered at the presentation of the medal was published by the Oriental Ceramic Society in 1971 as *History of Ming Porcelain*.

106. Fujio Koyama and John A. Pope, eds., *The Freer Gallery of Art*, vol. 10 of *Oriental Ceramics: The World's Great Collections* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1975).

107. For obituaries, see Thomas Lawton, "John Alexander Pope (1906–1982)," *Archives of the*

Chinese Art Society of America 36 (1983): 89–91; Henry Trubner, "In Memoriam: John Alexander Pope," *Ars Orientalis* 14 (1984): 1–3; Daisy Lion-Goldschmidt, "In Memoriam: John Alexander Pope (1906–1982)," *Arts Asiatiques* 36 (1984): 99.

108. Stern records his admiration for James Marshall Plumer (1899–1960) in an obituary published in *Oriental Art,* n.s., 7, no. 1 (Spring 1961): 47.

109. Harold P. Stern, "Ukiyoe Painting: Selected Problems" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1958).

110. The painting is discussed by Yanagisawa Taka, "An Example of Fujiwara Painting of Fugen Bosatsu (Samantabhadra)," *Bijutsu kenkyū,* no. 220 (January 1962): 29–42; Shimada Shūjirō, comp., *Zaigai hihō* (Japanese painting in Western collections) (Tokyo: Gakken, 1969), 2: pt. 1, plate 9.

111. The Four Guardian Kings are discussed by Julia K. Murray, *A Decade of Discovery: Selected Acquisitions, 1970–1980* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1979), pp. 51-52.

112. *New York Times,* June 17, 1973, sec. D, p. 23.

113. John M. Rosenfield and Henry Trubner, obituary of Stern in *Archives of Asian Art* 31 (1977–78): 113.

114. Obituaries of Harold P. Stern were written by Rand Castile, *Oriental Art,* n.s., 23, no. 4 (Winter 1977): 486; John M. Rosenfield and Henry Trubner, *Archives of Asian Art* 31 (1977–78): 112–14; Madeleine Paul-David, *Arts Asiatiques* 34 (1978): 240–41.

115. John A. Pope, Aschwin Lippe, and James F. Cahill, *Chinese Art Treasures: A Selected Group from the Chinese National Palace Museum and the Chinese National Museum* (Geneva: Skira, 1961).

116. See [Richard Edwards], "A Notable Event Recorded," *Oriental Art,* n.s., 10, no. 1 (Spring 1964): 60. Two sets of the approximately six thousand black-and-white and two thousand color negatives were made; one set was deposited in Taiwan and the other at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

117. *Chinese Cultural Art Treasures: National Palace Museum Illustrated Handbook* (Taibei: National Palace Museum, 1965).

118. Mrs. Meyer concluded her account, "But when I am no longer here to protect the scholarly standards of research and the quality of the new acquisitions, which were established by Mr. Freer's first curator, John Lodge, I hope and pray that the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian will maintain as a sacred trust, the integrity and independence of the greatest gallery of Oriental art in the Western world, and the confidence Mr. Freer had in their power to do this." Meyer, "Freer and His Gallery," sec. M, p. 7.

119. *Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Memorial Exhibition* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1971).

120. Thomas Lawton, "An Eighteenth-Century Chinese Catalogue of Calligraphy and Painting (An Annotated Translation of Sections Three and Four of *Mo-yüan hui-kuan* by An Ch'i)" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1970). Also see Lawton, "The *Mo-yüan hui-kuan* by An Ch'i," in *Symposium in Honor of Dr. Chiang Fu-tsung on His Seventieth Birthday* (Taibei: National Palace Museum, 1969), pp. 13-15; Lawton "Notes on Five Paintings from a Ch'ing Dynasty Collection," *Ars Orientalis* 8 (1970): 191–215.

121. Thomas Lawton, *Chinese Figure Painting* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1973). Publication of the catalogue was made possible by a gift in memory of Agnes E. Meyer by her children, Mrs. Ruth Epstein, Mrs. Katharine Graham, Mrs. Elizabeth Lorentz, and Dr. Eugene Meyer. Lawton was unable to complete his research on a hanging scroll originally scheduled for the *Chinese Figure Painting* exhibition. He subsequently discussed that scroll in a separate article, "The Sixtieth Painting: An Ancient Theme Reidentified," *National Palace Museum Quarterly* 11, no. 1 (1975): 17–36.

122. See Nakata Yūjirō and Fu Shen, comps., *Chūgoku hōsho meisekishu* (Masterpieces of Chinese calligraphy in American and European collections), 6 vols. (Tokyo: Chuokoronsha, 1981–83), 1: plates 8–14, 28–35, 80–83, 88; 2: plates 116–19, 123–25; 3: plates 6–10, 14–17, 33–34; 4: plates 6–11, 25–29, 42–43; 5: plates 3–5, 9-12, 14–16, 19–34, 51–67, 74–91, 107–15; 6: plates 1–3, 8, 12–15, 21, 41–43, 48–54, 75, 82, 84, 86, 88, 90, 95, 104, 118-21; Shen Fu, Glenn D. Lowry, and Ann Yonemura, *From Concept to Context: Approaches to Asian and Islamic Calligraphy* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1986), nos. 1–19.

123. Thomas Lawton, *Chinese Art of the Warring States Period: Change and Continuity, 480–222 B.C.* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1982).

124. René-Yvon Lefebvre d'Argencé, ed., *Treasures from the Shanghai Museum: Six Thousand Years of Chinese Art* (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 1983).

125. Burns A. Stubbs, *Paintings, Pastels, Drawings, Prints, and Copper Plates by and Attributed to American and European Artists, Together with a List of Original Whistleriana in the Freer Gallery of Art* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1948); Stubbs, *James McNeill Whistler: A Bibliographical Outline, Illustrated from the Collections of the Freer Gallery of Art* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1950).

126. Susan Hobbs,"The Little Known Side of One Great American Collector," *Smithsonian* 7 (January 1977): 50–57; Hobbs,"A Connoisseur's Vision," *American Art Review* 4 (August 1977): 76–101; Hobbs, *The Whistler Peacock Room* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1980); Hobbs, "Whistler at the Freer Gallery of Art," *Antiques* 120 (November 1981): 1194–1202.

127. David Park Curry, *James McNeill Whistler at the Freer Gallery of Art* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art in association with Norton, 1984).

128. Linda Merrill, *An Ideal Country: Paintings by Dwight William Tryon in the Freer Gallery of Art* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1990); Merrill, *A Pot of Paint: Aesthetics on Trial in "Whistler v. Ruskin"* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press in collaboration with the Freer Gallery of Art, 1992); Merrill and Sarah Ridley, *The Princess and the Peacocks; or, The Story of the Room* (New York: Hyperion, 1993); Merrill, ed., *With Kindest Regards: The Correspondence of Charles Lang Freer and James McNeill Whistler, 1890–1903* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art in association with Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995); Lawton and Merrill, *Freer;* Merrill, *Peacock Room.*

129. Quoted in Benjamin Forgey, "Quadrangle's Coming Attractions: Treasures from Asia and Africa," *Smithsonian* 13, no. 11 (February 1983): 84.

130. Secretary Ripley recorded the details of that first meeting in *Arthur M. Sackler MD 1913-1987* (London: Studio International, 1989), p. 10.

131. Quoted in Forgey, "Quadrangle," p. 87.

132. Quoted in ibid.

133. Quoted in Andrew Ciechanowiecki, "Tributes to Dr Arthur M. Sackler," in *Sackler,* p. 14.

134. Quoted in Miranda McClintic, "The Arthur M. Sackler Collections," in *Sackler,* p. 74.

135. Sotheby's, London, auction catalogue, May 16, 1967. Also see *New York Times*, May 17, 1967, p. 44. For a detailed analysis of the *you*, see Robert W. Bagley, *Shang Ritual Bronzes in the Arthur M. Sackler Collections* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 360–67. Dr. Sackler recounts the difficulties of obtaining the *you* in his foreword to Bagley's catalogue (p. 9).

136. For information on the *gui*, see Bagley, *Shang Ritual Bronzes*, pp. 521–36.

137. For assessments of Dr. Sackler's articles in the *Medical Tribune*, see "Tributes to Dr. Arthur M. Sackler," by Louis Lasagne and Linus Pauling in *Sackler*, pp. 12–13.

138. For details about the history of *Artibus Asiae*, see Thomas Lawton, "*Artibus Asiae*: Seventieth Anniversary," *Artibus Asiae* 55, nos. 1–2 (1995): 5–16.

139. Even though the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation no longer provides financial support for *Artibus Asiae*, each issue carries the statement: "In Memory of Dr. Arthur M. Sackler. His vision and commitment to the study of the arts of Asia have been supported by The Arthur M. Sackler Foundation through the publication of *Artibus Asiae* since 1983. Dr. Sackler recognized the importance of a publication of this caliber to the scholarly community."

140. Milo Cleveland Beach, *The Grand Mogul: Imperial Painting in India, 1600–1669* (Williamstown, Mass.: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1978).

141. Milo Cleveland Beach, *The Imperial Image: Paintings for the Mughal Court* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1981).

142. Milo Cleveland Beach, *The Adventures of Rama* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1983).

143. Funds from the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation and the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation for the Arts, Sciences, and Humanities supported publication of the catalogue *Asian Art in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery: The Inaugural Gift* and the journal *Asian Art*. In 1994 *Asian Art* was renamed *Asian Art & Culture* and was published three times a year. In the fall of 1997 *Asian Art & Culture* was replaced by an annual book series published in collaboration with the University of Washington Press.

144. Henri Vever (1854–1942) and his fellow collector Georges Marteau (1852–1916) were coauthors of *Miniatures persanes exposées au Musée des arts décoratifs*, 2 vols. (Paris: Bibliothèque d'art et archéologie, 1913), a visual record of the objects in the Paris exhibition. Forty-nine of the 277 entries in the publication were from Vever's collection.

145. *Catalogue of the International Exhibition of Persian Art* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1931). Vever loaned fifty-five of some of his finest pieces, including all his Demotte *Shahnama* paintings.

146. For François Mautin's personal account of the vicissitudes of Henri Vever's collections, see "A Remembrance," in Glenn D. Lowry with Susan Nemazee, *A Jeweler's Eye: Islamic Arts of the Book from the Vever Collection* (Seattle and Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in association with University of Washington Press, 1988), pp. 10–11.

147. Quoted in Milo Cleveland Beach, foreword to Lowry with Nemazee, *A Jeweler's Eye*, p. 7. The purchase of the Vever collection was made possible by Smithsonian Unrestricted Trust Funds, Smithsonian Collections Acquisition Program, and Dr. Arthur M. Sackler.

148. Lowry with Nemazee, *A Jeweler's Eye*; Glenn D. Lowry and Milo Cleveland Beach, *An Annotated and Illustrated Checklist of the Vever Collection* (Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in association with University of Washington Press, 1988). For several articles about the Vever collection at the Sackler Gallery, see also *Asian Art* 1, no. 4 (Fall 1988).

149. Quoted in Lon Tuck, "The Tale of the Treasure: The Sackler Curator's Mother and the Long-Lost Persian Art," *Washington Post*, January 10, 1986, sec. B, p. 3.

150. Contributions were made by Katharine Graham, the Philip L. Graham Fund, the Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation, The New York Community Trust — The Island Fund, and the children of Eugene Meyer III and Mary Bradley Meyer.

151. An inscription at the entrance of the Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Auditorium reads: "Their enduring friendship with Charles Lang Freer, their resolute participation in the establishment of the Freer Gallery of Art, and their extraordinary bequest to the Gallery's collection constitute a timeless legacy."

152. Three recitals of chamber music presented in the Freer auditorium on the afternoons of February 7, 8, and 9, 1924, were the gift of Mrs. Frederic Shurtleff Coolidge, who also supported the annual Berkshire festivals. Since the Freer auditorium seats 320 and the gallery's records note that a total of 1,030 people attended the three recitals, there must have been some standees.

153. The inaugural concert, on May 10, 1993, included the premier performance of John Corigliano's *Phantasmagoria*, a work commissioned for the evening by the Freer Gallery of Art and the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation in the Library of Congress. The Bill and Mary Meyer Concert Series has been established in memory of Dr. Eugene Meyer III and Mary Adelaide Bradley Meyer. It is generously supported by The New York Community Trust — The Island Fund and Elizabeth E. Meyer.

Thomas W. Lentz

IN FLUX: ASIAN ART AT THE ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY

Asia was not named by the people who lived there; it is not a concept that developed naturally. It is a name given by the European Other, looking at the continent from a vantage point out on the ocean.

—Shimizu Toshio, 1995[1]

Looking backward from the end of the twentieth century is a seductive practice. Nostalgia beckons, and with it comes the easy vision and false comfort that glance always provides, symptoms of restlessness and unease with the present. With near perfect clarity we now understand why contemporary notions of Asia would have been all but incomprehensible in the America of a century ago. The perception arriving so quickly today was effectively hidden in the early stages of that encounter in the nineteenth century, the result of much more than simple differences in time and distance. And this is where the trouble begins.

At the end of the last century, when Charles Lang Freer (1854–1919), one of the pioneering American collectors of Asian art, first turned his eyes in that direction, it is unlikely that his vision and thinking had not to some extent been shaped by long-held Western perceptions that, in essence, invented an "Asia." Inspired by contact with new visual forms but also conjured up from the perspective of Western military, political, and economic authority, those views projected Asia as a skewed alterity, a vast monolithic entity now recognized in many ways to have been profoundly and routinely misunderstood. Majestic and sickly, desired and feared, it took root in the imagination as an embodiment of European and American fantasy, an allure "oriental and disoriented" that to a large extent still holds today.[2]

It was against this background that in 1923 the Smithsonian Institution opened as its first art museum the Freer Gallery of Art, a gift from Charles Lang Freer to the American people and one dedicated to Asian and American art. It is, of course, the luxury of hindsight that has thrown into such deep relief the era's attitudes toward Asia. They are the echoes of earlier culture wars, and the point of raising them again is not to find fault with Freer, whose collecting vision in retrospect remains astonishingly broad and admirably perceptive compared to virtually all his contemporaries. What their resurrection is meant to suggest instead is the persistent fundamental problem for Western art museums and their viewers of seeing and understanding other cultures, for long-held fictive constructions such as "Orientals" or "East and West," however convenient or

Previous page: Central stairway, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 1987. Photograph by Neil Greentree

Untitled (near Ninh Binh), An-My Lê (born 1960), Vietnam, 1995, gelatin silver print, 33.5 x 47.8 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery — Purchase, s1997.17

deeply entrenched in our own current usage, are ultimately mythical in origin, false abstractions that continue to mask and ignore deeply complex realities.

In 1987, nearly sixty-five years after the Freer Gallery opened its doors to the public, another American, Arthur M. Sackler (1913–1987), once again dedicated a museum of Asian art at the Smithsonian. As with the Freer, a collection of art was given by Sackler — "a gift for the benefit of the people of the United States." Physically joined in 1993 to the Freer Gallery and served by the same staff, the Sackler recently marked its tenth anniversary and already stands as one of the preeminent museums of Asian art in the world, with growing collections, more than fifty exhibitions, and numerous scholarly publications, lectures, and international symposia behind it.[3] Like the Freer, the Sackler is primarily dedicated to the historical traditions of Asia, yet significantly, it reaches well beyond the former's scope to include other visual dimensions such as contemporary art, photography, village arts, and textiles. While differences exist in the physical structures, histories, and philosophies of the two institutions, as national museums both share the same imposing goal of increasing awareness and understanding of the artistic traditions of Asia.

No contrast between the two galleries, however, casts a greater shadow than the fact that they were born in different times. Along with the certainty that America has increasingly become a visual rather than literary society, the inescapable conclusion is that Asia of the late twentieth century is outrageously distanced from that of Freer's time. What the Sackler often engages

Cenotaph cover, Turkey, Ottoman dynasty, 17th–18th centuries, silk-satin, lampas weave, 189.5 x 67.3 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery—Purchase, S1996.62.1–2

today is a riot of disparate elements utterly severed from their original meanings, a mind-numbing complex of realities, experiences, and purposes wildly at variance with those of a century ago. That realization is further enhanced, despite the recent economic stumbling of the Asian "tigers," by a global technology revolution that continually restructures geopolitical relationships to the extent that some envision in the next century—the "dragon century"—a fundamental shift in power toward Asia.[4] Quite apart from this specific historical continuum, the art museum also finds itself poised on a teetering and contested landscape. Treasure house, educational instrument, and secular temple, the art museum, originally a Western invention, has traditionally been seen both as guardian of the past as well as virtuous provider of the common good. Its particular brand of "truth," unlike that associated with religion, is generally thought to belong to the realm of reason and empiricism, and consequently museums claim and are accorded an authoritative societal status.[5] In short, a prevailing popular perception is that museums are neutral entities with no ideological ax to grind, implying in turn that the objects and their arrangement in these ceremonial spaces are free from political, social, and moral considerations.

Nothing could be further from the truth is the reaction today from some quarters, particularly in Asia, where voices previously excluded from the dialogue are now both prominent and insistent. As a material embodiment of thoughts, perceptions, and attitudes, museums are clearly situated on an ideological plane, especially when the conscious, systematic collecting of other cultures is involved. For many who live in "collected cultures," Western museums that assemble Han jades, Islamic textiles, or Rajput paintings are blatant reminders of past and even current political and economic transgressions, the memory of pillage and colonialism never distant. These deeply felt and passionately argued perspectives have not been without influence or effect. Today few curators or art historians would deny, regardless of their field and whether or not they accept those arguments, that collections and exhibitions of Asian art in the West inherently reflect Western ordering propositions; through the repeated acts of choosing and displaying objects both construction and, by extension, appropriation are present.[6] It is ultimately of little consequence if that view emanates from an Indonesian, English, or Korean source. Regardless of origin, it begins to have the cumulative effect of detaching those cultural biases that originally gave objects meaning in a museum context, with the result that these objects have now in a very real sense begun to float free again. Museums

collecting other cultures at the end of this century — if they are honest — recognize the conflicted nature of their holdings and display strategies and clearly confront what has been called a "crisis of representation."[7] The dominant questions of the day are: What is to be collected, how is it presented, and who makes the choices? By virtue of its mission, institutional history, and specific place in time, the Sackler Gallery stands at the center of these debates. What kind of art museum will it be?

Matters of Interpretation

With the collapse after World War II of the great European colonial empires in Asia and Africa, non-European traditions assumed a newfound importance for the West and its museums, a development accelerated both by the onset of the cold war as well as the emergence of the Third World's national liberation movements. This is not to suggest that these traditions were previously unimportant for Western institutions. On the contrary, in the period leading up to that moment Asian art had already begun to assume major prominence in a number of general art museums, but its purposes and meanings in those contexts were often strikingly at odds with today's intentions. Collections formed during the nineteenth century, like the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, expanded not only as a result of increasingly systematized archaeological investigation but also for the purposes of illustrating vastly enlarged conceptions of human artistic creativity. Significantly, impetus was also provided by ideological considerations, as the collections of Asian art in British, French, and German museums readily attest. As an extreme example, German state cultural efforts in West Asia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries systematically sought out and removed to Europe major archaeological monuments, such as the spectacular Ishtar Gate, a Neo-Babylonian structure from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II (reigned 604–562 B.C.) taken from present-day Iraq, or the facade of the eighth-century Islamic palace at Mshatta in Syria, both now permanently housed in Berlin's Pergamon Museum. The taking of these massive trophies was clearly part of larger political, economic, and military strategies, tellingly motivated in part by an overwhelming sense of cultural presumptuousness and superiority: ". . . many German intellectuals considered it their calling to administer the cultural heritage of mankind."[8] Supportive of efforts like these were European classificatory schemes and cultural hierarchies that not only admirably organized and made more comprehensible masses of complex, unknown material but also assigned to

Asian artistic traditions distinctive readings that were in the view of many current observers reductive, homogenizing, and ultimately distorting—and are still in varying guises employed today. Without much effort, the old tropes of Asia can still be found in some museums, stubborn orientalist fragments that continue to echo both in the literature and "staged authenticity" of mass tourism as well as the Shangri-las of popular imagination, e.g., "eternal India," static and unchanging.

Jar with loop handle, Iran, Iron Age I-II, 1350–800 B.C., earthenware, 23.8 x 21.5 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, gift of Vida R. Stringer, S1997.49

It is now a dramatically different situation. The art museum and its philosophies were largely oblivious to the question of whose traditions were being displayed or whose art histories were being written and by whom. In the wake of developments like nationalism and postcolonialism as well as increased intellectual and political interest in issues such as race, gender, and ethnicity, Western museums collecting Asian art began slowly to acknowledge the existence of objects as well as communities that historically were forgotten, disdained, or unnoticed. For many, however, it was as if this new view seemed suddenly to appear and speak of an unofficial, undocumented Asian art history, one uncentered and at odds with reigning Western notions of Asia, the roots of which stretched back before Freer's time. This momentum toward a broader vision and greater inclusion was and still is regarded by many in the museum community as a nihilistic, irrelevant political insurgency, an unwelcome and confused interaction of social, economic, and ideological dimensions with what is essentially a historical aesthetic process.

But this is surely a disingenuous stance, for politics pervades all human endeavor. As Edward Said and many others have repeatedly asserted, politics is everywhere: "There can be no escape into the realms of pure art and thought or, for that matter, into the realm of disinterested objectivity or transcendental theory."[9] Whether one considers an art historian, an anthropologist, a curator, or collectors like Charles Freer and Arthur Sackler, it must be acknowledged that all are of *their* time; as members of specific nationalities with their own languages, traditions, and histories, each struggles against almost insurmountable difficulties in trying to escape the boundaries of their own "communities of thought."[10]

A very direct function of this realization and of Asia's vastly different status in the second half of this century is the more expansive Asian role in artistic and cultural discourse with the West. Museums today find it increasingly difficult to stand outside First and Third World debates over issues that involve the most profound levels of history, such as identity and

Figure of a Mourning Attendant, China, Tang dynasty, 7th century, limestone, 58.7 x 19.8 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, purchase—Friends of Asian Arts and Smithsonian Collections Acquisitions Program, S1996.37

representation. Asian art and its presentation now occupy highly charged spaces, with Asians newly vocal about how their many visual traditions will be represented. Debates within the academy over Asia have also been reflected in deep divisions concerning goals and methodology. The lines have been clearly drawn across various fields, from century-long battles among East Asian art historians in America over the role of culture in explicating visual form,[11] to historians of Islamic art questioning whether their European and American-derived categories of analysis and explanation are even appropriate to an understanding of visual creativity and development in the Islamic world.[12] The last few decades in particular have seen intellectual and theoretical boundaries pushed to points unimaginable for earlier generations, as art historians, many in the embrace of deconstructive practices, have further debunked and dismantled conventional wisdom.[13] Contemporary Asian art historians as well as artists now routinely challenge long-held Euro-American readings of notions such as "tradition" and "craft" in an Asian context.[14] At the end of this long visual road lies the conclusion that a viewer encountering Asian art in a Western museum can only choose from invented meanings, drawn from a screen of received cultural assumptions that have invariably shaped what one sees and how one should respond.

The Collecting Phenomenon

All of these debates have come to the fore—and matter—because of the issues raised by the phenomenon of objects assembled for the purpose of aesthetic viewing, the implication of that act being that, whatever their origins, certain objects possess an intrinsic visual interest that makes them worthy of our attention. Private or public in intent, the forces that drive this process are deeply fascinating, and its origins and motivations have much to say about the eventual forms, structures, and purposes of museums themselves. It has been observed, for example, that in Noah, the "ur-collector," all the themes of collecting itself can be found: "desire and nostalgia, saving and loss, the urge to erect a permanent and complete system against the destructiveness of time."[15] Well beyond the tidy surfaces of collecting statements and carefully considered object arrangements, these sentiments can nearly always be retrieved from the activities of the collector, whether it is one living in late-sixteenth-century France or modern-day Tehran or Singapore. As cultural phenomena, amusement and edification are the ostensible reasons easily offered by the collector and readily

A Bearded Man Leans upon a Stick, Iran, Safavid dynasty, ca. 1630–40, ink on paper, 17.4 x 6.6 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Unrestricted Trust Funds, Smithsonian Collections Acquisition Program, and Dr. Arthur M. Sackler, s1986.312

accepted by the public as a justifiable rationale for gathering; but possession also implies other behavioral impulses, some obvious (desire for eternity and commemoration), others not (fears of death and oblivion).[16]

When viewed as a behavioral rather than cultural phenomenon, collecting reveals even more complex dimensions not wholly inconsistent with the perceived institutional practices of museums. Jean Baudrillard, in fact, sees the act and process of collecting as a true system, a mental realm over which the collector alone holds sway.[17] In this view, once objects are divested of their function (because they are collected), they become possessions whose meanings are controlled by the collector, and these possessions, like mirrors, reflect not real but desirable images: "The image of the self is extended to the very limits of the collection. Here, indeed, lies the whole miracle of collecting. For it is invariably *oneself* that one collects."[18] It can only be assumed that as collectors both Freer and Sackler were not immune to this effect. What, then, is one to make of this "discourse oriented toward oneself," as Baudrillard calls it, particularly when these object systems later assume central positions within the larger institutional frameworks of museums? Can the collections assembled by these two major figures serve wider didactic purposes as foundations of national museums of Asian art? Or do museums, like collectors, turn cultural materials into something else?

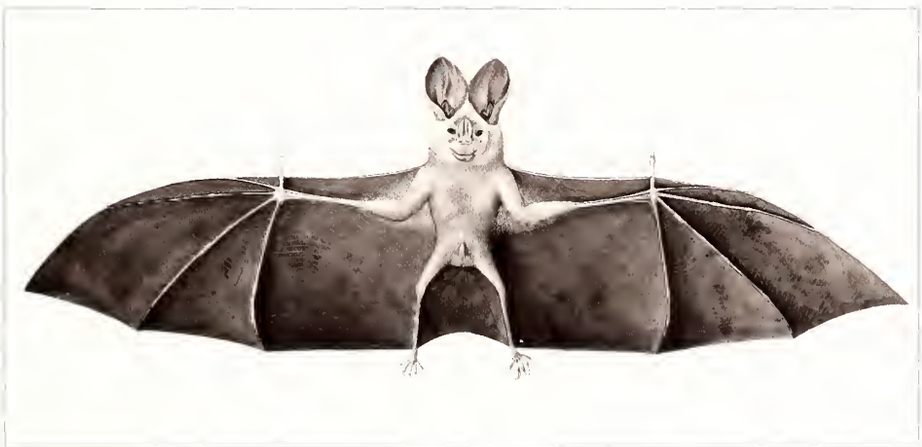
Like maps, museums are easy-to-manipulate models of reality. In the generally perceived fabric of an enlightened modernity, and despite competing perceptions as spectacles of possession or tourist sites, art museums still retain an aura of disinterested objectivity in the service of higher truths, their calling placing them until recently beyond the taint of class, racial, and ethnic prejudices. Much of this perception can be traced to the origins of the museum itself.[19] As the direct outgrowth of European princely collections of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the modern institution of the museum is the product of a specific intellectual and cultural climate. During the late Renaissance and Baroque periods, the long history of fascination with objects capable of provoking wonder or astonishment took shape as a major cultural force. Partly a continuation of earlier medieval beliefs in the miraculous and fantastic, the idea was propelled even further by the astonishing geographical discoveries of the day. Ultimately it was the Renaissance expansion of philosophical and scientific boundaries, allied with a rediscovery of antiquity's own enthrallment with the marvelous, that finally gave form and structure to this phenomenon.[20]

The National Museum at Washington," *Harper's Weekly,* January 12, 1889. Opened to the public in October 1881, the United States National Museum, previously housed in the Smithsonian Institution Building (the Castle), offered a wide range of exhibits, including geology, metallurgy, zoology, comparative technology, navigation, architecture, and "historic relics" in what is today the Arts and Industries Building.

It materialized as the *Wunderkammer,* or cabinet of curiosities, which housed both human artifacts and natural objects regarded as marvels of the age.[21] Many of the luminaries of European cultural history, such as Jean Duc du Berry, the Medici, and the Habsburgs, participated, but names less well-known today perhaps represent the true foundations of what has come to be recognized as the museum: Fernando Cospi and his Museo Cospiano in Bologna; the Ferrante Imperato in Naples; the Theatrum Anatomicum in Leiden; Ole Worm of Copenhagen; and the Tradescants' Museum Tradescantianum at Lambeth are all prominent and instructive early examples.[22]

The composite nature of these early collections — natural phenomena, "works of art," ethnographic material, including objects from Asia and the Americas — quickly and profoundly shook European notions of the world. By introducing tangible evidence of other possibilities, these collections were endowed with an ability to frame vision and perception for their viewers, and it is within that potent gaze that all subsequent museums in the West have been positioned. This microcosmic lens, which linked the physical and the metaphysical, forged a "mystical relationship between things and ideas . . . expressed by the classification of the physical world, primarily into artificial things and natural things, and then into smaller groupings."[23] During the eighteenth century the function of these early private collections was adopted and reworked by institutions increasingly public in nature and sometimes state-sponsored, their approach to collections influenced by the great leaps in scientific knowledge that occurred during the Enlightenment. With the introduction of more complex classificatory schemes, the fracturing of collections increased, and as divisions slowly widened between nature and art, different fields developed independently, bringing about the eventual emergence of public art museums. No longer spoils and treasures arranged as a cabinet of rarities or curiosities, the museum was now taming the marvelous with history and science.

Standardizing and domestication went hand-in-hand with the emergence in postindustrial Europe of a history of art, one that with complete ethnocentric confidence was capable of designating "masterpieces" that sequentially illustrated spiritual truths and excellence. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries these forces would coalesce in museums to weave together for wider audiences the past and present, an exercise oftentimes fueled by civic pride or by intellectual ideals ranging in intent from



Bat, India, Company School, ca. 1790, opaque watercolor on paper, 41.9 x 52.1 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery — Purchase, S1993.40

nationalism and ideology to aesthetic experience. During the latter half of the present century, however, the criteria employed by art museums for both knowledge and collecting came to be seen as increasingly suspect. The attraction of other organizing and didactic models, such as context and social function, exerted a strong pull away from aesthetics and classification toward approaches that emphasized the unique value of individual cultures, each to be understood on its own terms.[24]

At the same time, other powerful and conflicting forces came into play that questioned the generally perceived principles and history of the museum itself. European and American artists, for example, began to examine the "fiction of the museum," attacking and subverting the traditional classificatory schemes, philosophies, and policies of museums and collecting.[25] Finally, the inexorable march of history and sheer weight of human production has today impressed upon curators a realization of the impossibility of collecting everything, which in turn has forced an acknowledgment for many that collecting is ultimately less about representation per se and more about informed selection and choice.[26]

Arthur M. Sackler: The Science of Art

One should hardly view the broad debates that currently preoccupy the museum and academic community as irrelevant or simply a matter of internal conflict among old and new schools of thought. Intimately linked through their collections and practices with the history and philosophy of knowledge, museums have evolved into complex physical and conceptual structures that reflect, as they always have, both the intellectual tenor of their times and, with all its flaws, their inherently social character. This latter point has important implications for understanding the formation of the Sackler Gallery or of any other museum. The notion that all knowledge is a product of social interaction (and not simply dramatic discovery), and that in order to understand the social character of knowledge one must look to the historical context that produced it, points in the end back to those who form collections and by what criteria.[27]

Arthur M. Sackler surely understood the commanding role held by Charles Lang Freer in the American museum tradition. As heir to and a predominant innovator within a select collecting lineage that looked toward Asia, Freer to a large extent resisted the criteria of his own generation and class. In his earlier incarnation as a collector of American painting he embraced a philosophy, under the tutelage of the painter James McNeill

Arthur M. Sackler (1913–1987)

Whistler (1834–1903), that viewed works of art strictly for their aesthetic qualities. His belief in a universal aesthetic — one that sought visual relationships and harmonies among different objects — was the foundation of his collection and the specific philosophy that subsequently colored his perception of the arts of Asia.[28] Conceiving of himself as a modern-day Medici, Freer forged an independent and remarkably prescient path as a connoisseur; he could not, however, escape the fact that he was very much a man and collector of his time, albeit with his own preferences and interpretations. In keeping with the period, his Asian inclinations were decidedly East Asian, an institutional bias that was perpetuated in all Freer and Sackler directorial appointments until the present day.

Like Freer, Arthur Sackler also perceived and appreciated artistic affinities across cultural boundaries,[29] but his fundamental philosophical

and aesthetic outlook derived from decidedly different sources. As "an art-oriented, albeit primarily neuroendocrinologically biased psychiatrist,"[30] Sackler was above all a man of science. He established himself as a pioneer in the study of psychoneurotic symptoms, publishing more than 140 research papers in neuroendocrinology, psychiatry, and experimental medicine. A strong belief in scientific method and laboratory research were the underpinnings of a lifelong fascination with human creativity and the workings of the mind. His frequently repeated observation that "art and science are really two sides of the same coin" sheds light on his specific interest in the questions raised by art, particularly that of Asia: the search for causality, the use of artistic evidence in the analysis of civilizations, and an exploration of what in his view were the timeless fundamentals of the ancient visual traditions of Asia, the latter often prefiguring the achievements of Western art.[31] Sackler's own wide-ranging essays repeatedly underscore the primacy of research and the realm of ideas. A self-described "scientific and medical radical," he professed a readiness to explore and seek new ideas, techniques, and procedures, and he obviously reveled in the intellectual possibilities of his time, regarded by him as the most remarkable and expansive in the history of human knowledge.[32] To his mind it was inevitable that the boundaries between art and science continually blurred: "Research is fundamentally a process of discovery, one which is not limited solely to the laboratory or to a hospital ward, but extends to the realm of both literature and the intellect."[33] Buttressed by direct and indirect familiarity with the intellectual and scientific currents of his day, Sackler's horizons expanded exponentially through his deepening involvement with the arts and humanities. Scientific curiosity about the roots of causality translated to like-minded musings in the arts on subjects such as the peaking of civilizations ("cultural surges"), interdisciplinary studies, and cultural cross-fertilization.[34]

Very much aware of twentieth-century relationships between medicine and the arts — he cited among others Van Gogh's Dr. Gachet, Albert Barnes, Armand Hammer, and Paul Singer — Sackler's conflation of art and science found natural expression in his notions of cultural interplay. In discussing his collection of European terra-cottas, those predilections were in full display:

> With terra cottas I found I was going back, perhaps, to what I have called an ultimate expression of the neuromotor, the tactile and depth perspective experiences of man; to their expression in the plastic and

Paintings by Masami Teraoka, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, June 30–December 1, 1996

> spatial arts. . . . I have since wondered whether in the plastic arts of the terra cottas the biologic adage of "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny" was not paralleled in that a developing individual recapitulates what may have been the multimillennial experience of his forebears in the creative process related to clay, a process whose artifacts today, thousands of years later, provide us with objects of aesthetic joy as the striking neolithic pots of China, the beautiful sculptures of the goddesses of Anatolia and the fertility figures of Iran.[35]

A regard for art and its collection as a logical outgrowth of scientific and medical exploration was reinforced for Sackler by other models as well. For example, the collecting activities of two legendary eighteenth-century physicians, the brothers William Hunter (1718–1783; anatomist, surgeon, embryologist, pathologist, zoologist) and John Hunter (1728–1793; surgeon, embryologist, pathologist, zoologist) would seem to have struck a chord with Sackler, as their lives combined strong interest and collecting activity in both medicine and the arts, the latter preoccupation today preserved in the Hunterian Museum at Glasgow University.[36] These "Hunterian associations" caused Sackler to reflect both on the motives behind collecting (whether it was the result of genetic or environmental factors) and on the nature of human achievement:

> What is the measure of greatness? Is it just the vision which makes "self-evident" those secrets of nature which are hidden from most of us? Is it passionate dedication which explores, defines, and records the evidence supporting a newly revealed fundamental fact of nature

> or aesthetics? Or is it not the concurrences of both of these with the indefinable genius which projects them in such a manner as to change the minds and lives of men for generations and centuries to come?[37]

Clear differences existed between Freer and Sackler in their collecting activities and strategies. Chief among these was the environment in which they operated, for as opposed to Freer's days in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when he was at times an almost solitary pursuer of Chinese painting or Japanese ceramics, Asian art by Arthur Sackler's time had become a major global commodity. With art and economy entangled, he vied with the other great collectors of his day, the Rockefellers and Brundages, to build a major collection of Asian art.[38] Unlike Freer's more intuitive predilection for singular works of art, Sackler could be said to have assembled works in part on a scientific basis, reflexively seeking sufficiently numerous examples — a corpus of data — from which to draw rational conclusions; it was a perspective that led to the assimilation of large bodies of objects, including "study material" as well as collections formed by others.[39] While Freer pioneered the first major American museum primarily devoted to the arts of Asia, Sackler, through his later support of the Sackler Gallery in Washington and another museum of Asian art, the Arthur M. Sackler Museum of Art and Archaeology at Peking University (opened in 1993), was one of several major participants in a movement in late-twentieth-century America that focused on the artistic traditions of non-Western cultures. It was an impulse that took various forms, from the construction of the Rockefeller wing at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York to the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art in Washington, D.C.

Sometimes unfairly criticized as an indiscriminate gatherer, a "bulk" collector with only an incidental interest in aesthetics, there is no denying that, for Sackler, numbers were an important collecting criterion. In his view they were a necessary prerequisite to any deeper and more accurate understanding, whether one worked in the arts or the sciences: "When a large enough corpus of material has been gathered, a representative as well as a true reconstruction of the past can be attempted. In such a total historical reconstruction, it is vital that study materials as well as masterpieces be preserved."[40] Not unlike Freer, however, Arthur Sackler amassed collections that were central to a far grander vision. Freer sought aesthetic harmonies across time and space, seeking in the appearances of individual works he so

Bell (*zhong*), China, Shang dynasty, 12th century B.C., bronze, 31.0 x 24.8 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, gift of Arthur M. Sackler, S1987.10

carefully assembled a kind of optical sense of some individual, transcendent truth. In building a unified corpus of knowledge, Sackler on the other hand brought a synthesizing view to the issues raised by both art and material culture, in the end hoping not simply to draw common threads across cultures but to also locate an ability capable of reconstructing and understanding whole civilizations. Freer may have focused his vision to grasp the singularity of the object, but Sackler employed art to fathom matters clearly external to the object. The final goal, in medicine or the arts, as doctor or collector, was understanding what was resistant to understanding:

> We need more than ever to build links of understanding and mutual respect between peoples of different civilizations. All, in our mutual interest, must seek to reach a goal which can best be fulfilled through

the building of the most bridges between civilised men and women of culture, of all cultures — the arts, the sciences, the humanities.[41]

Displaying Asia

Since its inception and subsequent physical linkage to the Freer Gallery of Art, the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery has to a large extent been defined by its relationship with its sister institution. Younger, less known, with smaller collections (some three thousand objects) and a new constituency, it navigates the interval between the Freer and its own future. The Freer is regarded as a rather hallowed place for devotees of Asian art and for those who prefer quiet reflective spaces, holding more than twenty-seven thousand works. Its traditional embrace of connoisseurship, formalism, and aesthetics places few physical barriers between a work of art and the viewer in its elegant, human-scaled, and Renaissance-inspired architecture: the object reigns supreme here. Selective knowledge and taste, as embodied in ever-present demonstrations of Charles Lang Freer and his successors' choices, are the perceived hallmarks of the institution.

Beside it, largely hidden beneath the ground, its presence assertively marked by a sharply delineated phalanx of pyramids above a granite-sheathed entrance pavilion, the Sackler offers the visitor an alternative framework for interaction with works of art. In place of the regularity and symmetry of the Freer, interior spaces at the Sackler, while generally modest in scale like those at the Freer, are both more active and interactive. The defining geometries imposed by prominent stairways and walkways have vertically divided space into more complex multiple levels, creating intersections and juxtapositions that run counter to the inevitable sequential

Bridge: Illusion in Clay, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, March 2–July 6, 1997

unfolding of the Freer galleries, which all rest on the same level. A very different view of Asia — more inclusive, dynamic, and far-ranging — is also possible here. Unlike the Freer, which neither borrows nor lends, Sackler exhibitions and displays draw from outside resources as well as its own notable strengths in Chinese, Islamic, and ancient Near Eastern art to provide perspectives not found at the Freer, from Sri Lankan Buddhist sculpture and Central Asian textiles to monumental contemporary ceramics from Taiwan. New fields bring new approaches, and contextual, technical, anthropological, and critical perspectives have informed Sackler investigations. Here the object is also central, but it is placed in a more textured and nuanced field of vision.

Needless to say, these distinctions are drawn with a decidedly broad brush. Though many perceive that the Sackler Gallery is based to some extent on a "rejection" of the Freer and its austere ideologies, it is also true that many of the particularities of "Freer culture" remain firmly embedded in the consciousness with which the Sackler defines its work. In reality there are multiple parallels and redundancies between the two museums based on logistical and structural necessities as well as similarities in approach; much of this is attributable to the fact that a single staff administers both institutions, with curators straddling two separate collections and histories. Yet undeniable is the fact that Sackler programs and collections at times explicitly militate against the values generally associated with the Freer. *Puja: Expressions of Hindu Devotion,* for example, a Sackler exhibition that examines how objects of devotion in a Hindu Indian context truly function on religious and social levels, would not likely have been implemented within the walls of the Freer. Drawing on museum objects, touchable objects,

Puja: Expressions of Hindu Devotion, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, March 17, 1996

soundtracks, videos, maps, contemporary photographs from India, household shrines from America, and a resource center, the exhibition was an effective collaboration among art historians, anthropologists, designers, educators, and members of the Hindu community. Many of the works assembled, for the most part village and tribal objects, would not be construed by purists as "masterpieces" — of visual interest and power, yes, but not supreme artistic expressions of their type. If, however, they are viewed primarily with an eye toward internal cultural meaning, the assembled objects are capable of yielding new and unexpectedly rich visual rewards.[42]

What the Sackler has forced with exercises like this — welcome or not — is a rather trenchant institutional critique of the Freer. Institutions ultimately move forward by renegotiating their own history, and it may be that one of the Sackler's principal roles will be to help reexamine a traditional way of looking at Asia from the West. For when Asia's many historical and contemporary cultures intersect and commingle with a myriad of perspectives from within and without those cultures, and all in close proximity as at the Freer and Sackler, the stakes are rather dramatically and visibly raised for both presenter and viewer. The role of tradition, notions of cultural specificity and hybridity, visual and cultural stereotypes, reductive categorization and classification — all are laid open to question and exploration as curators grapple with competing sensibilities in an effort not only to provide a meaningful visual experience for viewers, but also to place objects in a more accurate and comprehensive context.

What will be privileged in this equation: the object or context? aesthetics or function? visual concerns or social and political meaning? The Freer and Sackler rather naturally fall into opposite camps that physically and conceptually evoke the conflicted roles of the twentieth-century art museum: the temple sanctum, the holy site where objects rest in a meditative, aestheticized space, or the arena, a forum where ideas as embodied in works of art are contested. One could, however, similarly reach the conclusion that these tensions need not be seen as confrontational values; on the contrary, they can be seen expansively, and if properly interrelated and imaginatively exploited, each can actively reinforce the impact of the other. It is a framework that reinforces the idea among visitors that no one viewpoint is "correct."

The new multicultural challenges that confront museums like the Sackler are in reality battles over the definition of cultures, and those characterizations, once stripped of their own distinctive rhetoric and trappings,

are at their core about historical ways of seeing Asia. As far back as the late sixteenth century, Western art museums and their precursors have mapped out a varied record of those often disorganized and chaotic encounters, some personal and random, others historical and starkly colonial. Despite the best intentions of scholars, curators, and designers, Asia in all its staggering complexity and richness is often still physically reduced in art museums to an assemblage of glittering fragments — it is the nature and structure of the museum process. By means of the different but always similar theatrical tactics of museums, the viewer is guided (or perhaps gropes uneasily) through a cultural obstacle course, following a sequence of objects (almost always removed from their original context), labels (sometimes simplistic), classifications (often reductive), and stereotypes (almost always subtle and distorting) configured along a grand (usually) chronological pathway. This is not to be read as cynical or flippant, but simply as a frank acknowledgment of systemic and conceptual limitations: museums are virtually doomed to convey a mass of conflicting visual, intellectual, and emotional signals about a subject deeply divided in the Western mind between representation and reality. And within this ordered, shining mass of cultural pieces one is encouraged to enter a particular kind of visual contemplation, a way of seeing that in the West demands a "special quality of attention."[43]

Much thought and reflection in recent years have been devoted to the special complexities and dynamics of the museum space and what occurs there. It is a line of inquiry that not only circles back to the primary behaviors of collectors themselves but also integrates in its reasoning the interrelated choices and actions of a wider web of agents — makers, patrons, exhibitors, viewers — in an attempt to understand why museums work the way they do. In brief, it operates from the following premise: by encouraging a specific way of viewing that isolates, heightens, distances, and charges, the museum transforms an object, regardless of its original cultural value or intent, into an object of visual interest, that is, a work of art. This omnipresent aesthetic reordering, European in origin and accepted as normative, has to some extent been present since the inception of museums. Embedded in the *Wunderkammer*s of German Renaissance princes as well as later collections of Chinese art in Boston or Indian art in London, its rationale, far removed at this level from political and intellectual considerations, is above all visual interest and distinction. It is what Svetlana Alpers has called the "museum effect," and it is the structural

Storage basket for sardines, Hiroshima Kazuo (born 1915), Japan, 1995, bamboo, 48.0 x 49.0 x 43.5 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, gift of Nakamura Kunio, s1996.34ab

aspects of the museum with its conventions of display — cases, lighting, arrangements, labels — that help "establish certain parameters of visual interest, whether those parameters are known to have been intended by the objects' producers or not."[44]

This last observation is particularly germane to Western art museums that display the visual cultures of Asia. One could, for example, argue consistently and persuasively that much of what today constitutes collections of Asian art was not primarily made for visual exhibition, display, or even heightened viewing as it has come to be understood in Europe and America, even though the act of seeing is implicit in and basic to the original function. Whole classes of objects — Koran pages, ancient Chinese bronzes and jades, Japanese swords, Islamic and Indian metalwork, Iznik tiles, Luristan bronzes, Khmer ceramics — could all easily fall into this category, where visual distinction may in some cases have originally been at best an ambivalent cultural value for both maker and user. In the end, of course, museums argue that this is all beside the point, for "what the museum registers is visual distinction, not necessarily cultural

significance."[45] While the primary motivation behind the Sackler Gallery's *Basketmaker in Rural Japan* exhibition was certainly a desire to illuminate aspects of cultural continuity and change in modern-day Japan, its ultimate rationale as an exhibition was the striking visual presence of the bamboo baskets made by Hiroshima Kazuo.[46] Whatever other claims or purposes were intended or suggested, if the baskets were not of compelling visual interest they would not have been the subject of an exhibition in an art museum.

Decisions and interactions from multiple perspectives, some active, others passive, trigger this process. Viewers, museum directors, patrons, collectors, curators, exhibition designers, and art historians all bring a wide range of competing and often inappropriate concepts and attitudes to the object, but the one common element that clearly unites their attention and involvement is visual interest. Cognizant of the process or not, participants in this sequence are complicit in isolating and transferring objects from their original setting and investing them with new meanings as art. One in fact can argue that the museum, in employing the radical, transfiguring power of this act, essentially attempts to fashion a new and separate world, with art as the locus of that construction. Through this distancing and removal from context, objects in a sense are disarmed, rendered neutral, and made more approachable — and malleable. By coaxing new meanings from an object — those not noticed, explicit, or understood in its primary context — or by allowing them to easily receive an imposed meaning, original cultural significance is obscured. As Masao Yamaguchi has observed of commodities elevated to the status of "art": "They turn into a kind of simulacrum of life once they are taken out of the flow of life, and acquire a kind of autonomy at the cost of their position in relation to everyday life" — a view that also echoes his assertion that all exhibitions suffer from the condition of being fake.[47]

The Conflicted Role of Wonder

All of this leaves Asian art museums in the West in a rather precarious position as the century draws to a close. If one can at least agree that museums transform objects, that original functions and intentions are often diminished or marginalized in the highly relative and acculturated process of acquisition, interpretation, and display, is it even possible for contextual and cultural meaning to be conveyed to viewers? Is the art museum not the place to seek answers about the values and meanings embodied in Asia's

myriad visual traditions? Is it simply to ourselves — and for ourselves — that we are displaying Asian art?

Positioned at the very origins of the museum in the West is an underlying and pervasive metaphysical dimension, one that in its formal acts of assemblage, contemplation, and definition ultimately seeks to uncover the deeper relationships and harmonies of the universe itself. Historically this has been a pursuit, despite the later overlays of science and reason, that often assumed near mystical overtones. One can recognize in the gradual change during the seventeenth century of the princely collection's emphasis from simple possession of marvels to the symbolic evocation of mastery over them — and by extension the world or worlds they represented — that a decisive and fundamental shift in perception had been effected, one that remains central to today's art museums. Literally and figuratively, that shift resulted in vision, not possession, assuming a new defining power, and at the very heart of that transformation has always stood a fundamental and dominant belief in the ability of objects (works of art) in appropriate settings (museums) to arouse wonder in the viewer.

This recognized capacity of objects to elicit surprise, delight, and awe, a phenomenon rooted in the cult of the marvelous that dominated early European collections, never clearly vanished but instead was assimilated into the development of aesthetic understanding as it took form in the West. The almost primal potency and reach of this experience is not to be underestimated, and much of its transformative power can be vividly sensed in the intensity and depth of early European reactions to the discoveries of the "Indies." It has not only been persuasively argued that wonder was the "central figure in the initial European response to the New World, the decisive emotional and intellectual experience in the presence of radical difference,"[48] but wonder also serves as an intriguing link to the wider philosophical and aesthetic discourse so critical to an understanding of how and why museums occupy the position they do in our culture. That observation is not meant to imply that specific visual or intellectual parallels can be drawn between the two very different cultural and historical phenomena of the European discovery of the New World (their search for Asia) and America's later encounter with Asia. What it does suggest, however, is the presence of a sufficient experiential similarity — radical reaction to difference — between the two to perhaps reveal something of the dynamic and meaning that non-Western art has come to assume in the West. The investigations of one scholar in particular, Stephen Greenblatt,

A Banquet in an Encampment, attributed to Miskin, India, Mughal dynasty, ca. 1600, opaque watercolor and ink on paper, 22.5 x 12.7 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery — Purchase, S1987.1103

have focused on the interrelationships among these phenomena, and his findings offer both provocative and compelling views on the processes that come into play when museum visitors confront other cultures.

No visitor can reasonably be expected to enter art museums with the necessary range of cultural and historical resources to truly understand the vast complexities of other traditions, be it in a Mughal drawing, an Eastern Zhou bronze, or a Sasanian silver plate. Greenblatt suggests that two modes

of experience are available to the visitor in this encounter: resonance and wonder. By resonance, he refers to the ability of a displayed object to transcend its formal boundaries and summon a larger world, "to evoke in the viewer the complex, dynamic cultural forces from which it has emerged and for which it may be taken by a viewer to stand"; wonder, as already seen, suggests the "power of the displayed object to stop the viewer in his or her tracks, to convey an arresting sense of uniqueness, to evoke an exalted attention."[49] One recognizes in these two distinct models a subtle but significant reframing of the terms of the long-running debate over context versus art, yet what is suggested is not the dominance of one over the other in the display of objects, but that one leads to the other.

Critics have noted that Greenblatt clearly privileges wonder in this equation as he seeks to preserve the power and value of the aesthetic experience, although, it is worth noting, not by defining wonder as a universal experience mediated through the traditional means of connoisseurship. Significantly, he reframes this impulse to show that wonder has its own history and context that have changed over time, traceable in the shift from the Renaissance to the present that saw the spectacle of possession transformed into a visual cult of the object.[50] What is suggested is a view that combines the dynamic elements of aesthetics and context not by emphasizing the primacy of universal aesthetic ideals — as Freer postulated and many art museums still do — but by constructing a framework for visitors that demonstrates both the continuities and differences between aesthetic evaluations *and* contexts in which objects can be apprehended. In other words, there exist different experiences of wonder, each situated and understood within their own specific cultural contexts, which change over time and from place to place.

What this "historicizing gaze" provides is a model for the display of the "other," for showing Asian art (or that of any other non-Western culture) in Western museums without "replacing their view of how an object means with ours."[51] The approach derives from a practice developed for the interpretation of literary texts that studies the historical circumstances of their original production and consumption while at the same time analyzing the linkage between these circumstances and our own; it seeks in effect to "situate the work in relation to other representational practices operative in the culture at a given moment in both its history and our own."[52] To the extent that this strategy has any long-term value or utility for art museums:

Seated Figure of Jambala, Tibet, 13th century, bronze with traces of pigment, 41.0 x 25.0 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery — Purchase, S1996.39

it would reinforce the attempt to reduce the isolation of individual "masterpieces," to illuminate the conditions of their making, to disclose the history of their appropriation and the circumstances in which they came to be displayed, to restore the tangibility, the openness, the permeability of boundaries that enabled the objects to come into being in the first place.[53]

This approach represents a formidable challenge for those who present and interpret Asian art. Curatorial intervention as it is understood today obviously aims to position a work contextually, but the fact that this work occurs in a museum continually compromises that effort. In the later

Preserving Ancient Statues from Jordan, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in association with the Conservation Analytical Laboratory, Smithsonian Institution, June 30, 1996–April 6, 1997

twentieth century the display of other cultures in the West has followed a now-familiar interpretive arc that has historically vacillated between recontextualization and art. Even in the postmodern or postcolonial era, presentation strategies have run the gamut from an emphasis on "universal values" — a particularly favorite modernist response to traditional non-Western art — to those that, in an attempt to present objects as they "are," celebrate difference and pluralism.[54] Yet in tracing these museological paradigms one nonetheless is able to identify a discernible closing of the gap, a real movement toward the integration of a traditionally bifurcated museum vision, and one that despite false starts and recurring contradictions continues to slowly change, refine, and historically ground Western perceptions of Asian art. Equally implicit is a recognition that this complex, contentious process can never be anything other than an ongoing one. As it always has, Asian art very much follows its own path, whether that path is capable of being recognized in the West or not, and our attempts to read it will require a continual acknowledgment of and adaptation to independent self-definitions of Asian art, both contemporary and historical. In other words, the future will demand ever greater effort and agility on the part of Western viewers, particularly given the likelihood that the available approaches and responses to Asian art may well merge into a kind of advanced mode of "cultural hybridity" that is reflective both of our views and of Asia's own global recontextualization.[55]

Many of the ideas art museums have historically disseminated about Asia can easily be regarded as ideological constructs (political, aesthetic,

taxonomic, moral), which are perceived and experienced as natural facts by visitors. Both Western and Asian critics continue to call into question the institution's role and purpose and argue instead for alternative ways of understanding visual histories. Reaching that goal will be far from easy, despite the considerable progress of recent years.

The reconfiguration proposed by Greenblatt is both plausible and desired, but wonder is not without its own pitfalls as a visual and conceptual strategy; it has also been deployed as a means to subvert the museum. The Museum of Jurassic Technology, for example, a small but knowing storefront museum in present-day Los Angeles, functions as a kind of late-twentieth-century *Wunderkammer*. Wonder and its imaginative potentialities are clearly embraced there, but at the same time its ostensible subject is lampooned by means of the authoritative conventions both art and science have historically exercised through museums, as labels, footnotes, and didactic panels subtly (and perhaps even affectionately) satirize the tiresome, pedantic qualities scholarship frequently exhibits in those forms.[56] In addition, admonitions against "excessive wonder" are hardly without precedent in history. Descartes's often-repeated observation that wonder is of use only insofar as it leads man to knowledge is but one example, and these criticisms, whether found in literary or in artistic criticism and theory, arise from ancient debates over the values of instruction versus delight.[57]

For the aesthete, does reaction to the onset of wonder conflict with the aesthetic effect of the object? And what of the danger of wonder in other aesthetic guises drawing the viewer even further away from historical context and original intention? Museums, along with traditional curators and art historians, have frequently encouraged the public to exercise a familiar cultural reflex that embraces the idea of art as timeless, eternal, and universal. Does it send a wrong message by beginning to suggest that the mediated world of the museum is more significant than the real one? This attitude has hampered both critical art historical investigations as well as exhibitions that delve into the political, social, and cultural meanings of works of art, with the result that those efforts are often dismissed as irrelevant, misguided efforts that threaten the cherished belief in art's transcendent powers and functions.[58]

Those beliefs and practices would clearly seem to deny the fact that works of art have historical lives. Art may be universal in its lessons and can indeed profoundly inform or alter our own sense of humanity, but it can also distort and obscure awareness of art's historical resonance, of its rich

Yogini, India, Tamil Nadu, Chola dynasty, 10th century, stone, 116.0 x 76.0 x 43.2 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, gift of Arthur M. Sackler, S1987.905

specificity, and of the variety and inherent instability of individual cultures that immeasurably enhance human experience and understanding. The juxtaposition in art museums of objects from different cultures has only served to underscore this point, as the variety that results from these adjacencies additionally emphasizes the fundamental cultural relativity of meanings and values. With the ascendancy of detached classification, sophisticated visualization techniques, and the commodifying encroachments of the marketplace — Baudrillard would say there is a "strong whiff of the harem" about these activities[59] — the art museum, while it has largely

left behind plunder and curiosities, still remains flawed as a structure capable of investigating the original visual meanings and intentions of Asia's artistic traditions. Is it a question of resistant cultural otherness, or is Asian art to be seen as no more than a dislocated version of our own aesthetic belief system? Perhaps art museums as they exist in the West are no more than the sites where different worlds are synthesized into a new one — ours. It is our construction, with its own culturally determined vision, that we have chosen as the primary instrument for looking at Asian art.[60] Is that what we really desire?

The Possibility

At the end of the twentieth century, simply looking at ourselves seems little more than a luxurious, indulgent illusion that can no longer with any real conviction be deployed when displaying Asian art. If the museum is a lens we have chosen through which to see Asia — to understand the cultural ideals that produced the landscapes of Ma Yuan, the religious meanings of Chola sculpture, or the political ideologies and aesthetic codes that drove ceramic production in Fatimid Syria — then one must look *through* that lens, and not be content only with its reflection.

Art museums by their history and nature can hardly avoid encouraging the "exalted attention" that is their distinguishing characteristic; despite assaults on its veracity and intentions in recent years, the institution will remain a potent and transformative means of interpreting both the world and our lives. As has always been the case, the museum is the product of the very forces — political, social, cultural — today considered by some as inappropriate or irrelevant for museums and the study of art history. The critical differences now lie in the origins and contents of those influences, as well as the seeming speed and tenacity with which they have arrived, for they have quickly and forever altered our methods and perceptions of Asian art history.

While the Western world debates what is and what is not art, much of Asia may simply note that finally a view of its traditions is emerging that is not condescending, reductive, or distorted. In recent decades major advances have come about because of increased academic specialization, expanding geographic focus, and broadened critical methodologies; that momentum will continue as art historians and curators, now allied with anthropologists, historians, critical theorists, and a host of other researchers from a variety of disciplines, further extend and refine our

understanding. More and more the result of these efforts will be a retrieval of the original meanings and intentions of Asian artistic traditions, many of which will no doubt run counter to current aesthetic readings and historical interpretations. This development should not imply that present-day art history as practiced in universities and museums has been restructured as a utopia of truth seekers endowed with Delphic vision, unaffected by national affiliations or self-interest: art history is a politically freighted enterprise. Above all, it remains an interpretive history, grown more open and far-reaching at the same time that it has become more intellectually demanding and questioning. A direct result of this evolution has been a more inclusive and accurate art history, mutually reinforcing rather than mutually exclusive, and the art museum has not been immune. As the art historical agenda increasingly examines the "relativity of canons," it can only follow that museums will simultaneously incorporate different intentions, definitions, and standards, placing them not in a hierarchy but side by side.[61]

From its inception in 1987 the Sackler Gallery has been forced to confront a series of perceived dichotomies — past, present, and future — that are deeply tied to its evolving relationship with the Freer's own distinguished history. During its brief life this linkage has inspired, frustrated, and challenged the Sackler, forcing a continual critical reevaluation of what it means to be not simply a new national museum or one linked to an older and more revered institution, but rather what *should* a museum of Asian art in America actually be as the twenty-first century draws near. This question has no simple or ready answer, but perhaps its only answer is the question itself. As a museum clearly in the throes of establishing its own identity, the Sackler has to date been driven by that ongoing reflective act, assuming it as both critical philosophy and operational framework. This in essence means that the Sackler Gallery is — and may in one sense always remain — a work in progress.

The Sackler Gallery is a new museum of Asian art precisely because Asia and our perceptions of it have so profoundly changed, forcing a path unlike that of its celebrated neighbor and predecessor. Historically and intellectually it cannot be otherwise, and consequently a different legacy of achievement, alternately harmonizing and clashing with that of the Freer, will emerge. Contrary to some perceptions, the relationship between the Sackler and the Freer is neither confrontational nor parasitic but instead symbiotic, at once mutually sustaining and capable of new formations and

Yagi Akira (born 1955), *Vestige '93-2*, Japan, 1993, porcelain, lacquer, Japanese cypress wood, 23.7 x 100.0 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery — Purchase, s1994.62

possibilities. The Sackler should, in fact, be welcomed as a liberating complement to the Freer.

Euro-American traditions of art history and aesthetics will likely always remain the basis of the Western art museum tradition, essentially guaranteeing a continual interaction with our growing awareness of Asia and its artistic traditions. This endless loop suggests that greater knowledge and understanding of Asian art are more inclined to flow from organic than linear approaches; instead of the two-way street of "East and West," perception will be a far more complex and interconnected phenomenon, with multiple routes, entry points, and exits. And while the certainty of former times has been replaced with debate and doubt, rather than avoid these difficult questions art museums need to embrace them. The eminent physicist Richard Feynman, for one, believed that uncertainty was something to be treasured because its alternative was authority, against which science had struggled for centuries; he maintained that "doubt is not to be feared but welcomed," for rather than hamper our ability to know it instead represents the very essence of knowing.[62] One suspects that a man of science like Arthur Sackler would approve of that sentiment, and the interrogative mode is what his namesake must preserve as it grows and matures.

But is working as a national museum within a federal framework conducive to free-ranging exploration, independent research, and unfettered artistic expression? The recent Smithsonian response to the *Enola Gay* controversy strongly suggests otherwise, although subsequent administrative positions on issues such as contemporary art are more encouraging.[63] Nevertheless, the Sackler will navigate through this institutional impasse, just as it struggles through the pitfalls of projecting current assumptions onto the lives of objects drawn from Asian cultures.

The task at hand is for objects first and foremost to be historically and culturally grounded; the challenge then is to accurately reintegrate into those contextualizations the pleasure and power of aesthetic understanding so that the museum experience consists of more than simply "standing on the conveyer belt of history."[64] From the perspective of the museum tradition and its interaction with Asia, a Sackler goal should be to assist in the repositioning of this sense of wonder, this "startle reflex" characteristic of the Freer approach to Asian art and so deeply entrenched in the consciousness of the West. The Manichaean struggles that frequently shaped early internal debates on the respective roles of the Freer and Sackler (serious vs. popular, scholarship vs. outreach, chamber music vs. the Boston Pops) clearly ignored this rich potential the two museums together hold: a museum synthesis capable of sustaining for the viewer both historical memory and "enchanted looking."[65]

Debate about issues of continuity and change, tradition and innovation, will forever hover over the relationship of the two museums. It would be a mistake, however, to divide the two along those lines, for the Freer and Sackler hold far greater promise in a syncretic stance — one that at this point looms as no more than a kind of imagined possibility, but which nonetheless represents a philosophical amalgam capable of moving the institutions toward an expanded and more accurate vision. Because of the foresight and generosity of Charles Lang Freer and Arthur M. Sackler, one of the most important collections of Asian art in the world now resides in Washington, D.C., held in trust for the people of the United States. The final responsibility for these national museums is to reorient the discourse of collecting begun by these two very different individuals toward deeper recognitions, sympathies, and understandings of Asian art.

NOTES

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1. Shimizu Toshio, "Visions of Happiness," in *Visions of Happiness* (Tokyo: Japan Foundation Forum, 1995), p. 17.

2. Apinan Poshyananda, "Roaring Tigers, Desperate Dragons in Transition," in *Contemporary Art in Asia: Traditions/Tensions* (New York: Asia Society Galleries, 1996), p. 23. The most compelling overview of these historical attitudes and their often racist subtext can be found in Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1979). Less well known are studies that focus on the more specific and popular literary aspects of this intellectual tradition, such as Robin W. Winks and James R. Rush, eds., *Asia in Western Fiction* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990); Cécile Parrish, *The Image of Asia in Children's Literature: 1814–1964*, Centre of Southeast Asian Studies Miscellaneous Papers (Victoria, Australia: Monash University, 1977). Parrish underscores the depth and pervasiveness of these attitudes in the West by noting (p. 1) that "nowhere, except in the propaganda literature of certain totalitarian states, have assumptions of the superiority of one race over another been expressed so blatantly, and so unvaryingly, as in the late nineteenth century boys' adventure stories of the British Empire and their twentieth century descendants."

3. Letter of agreement between Arthur M. Sackler and the Smithsonian Institution, July 28, 1982, p. 1. For an overview of the inaugural gift, see Thomas Lawton, Shen C. Y. Fu, Glenn D. Lowry, Ann Yonemura, and Milo C. Beach, *Asian Art in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery: The Inaugural Gift* (Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1987); Milo C. Beach, Ann Gunter, Glenn D. Lowry, Jessica Rawson, Fu Shen, and Jao Tsung-i, "The Arthur M. Sackler Gallery," *Orientations* 18, no. 9 (September 1987): 36–84. A subsequent review of the Sackler Gallery's history and collections can be found in *Oriental Art* 43, no. 3 (1997), which commemorates the tenth anniversary of the museum.

4. Poshyananda, "Roaring Tigers," pp. 23–28.

5. Carol Duncan, "Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship," in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), pp. 91–93.

6. Michael Baxandall, "Exhibiting Intentions: Some Preconditions of the Visual Display of Culturally Purposeful Objects," in *Exhibiting Cultures*, p. 34. See Stanley J. O'Connor, "Critics, Connoisseurs, and Collectors in the Southeast Asian Rain Forest," *Asian Art* 6, no. 4 (Fall 1991): 51–67.

7. Susan M. Pearce, *Museums, Objects, and Collections* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), p. 241.

8. Thomas W. Gaehtgens, "The Museum Island in Berlin," in *The Formation of National Collections of Art and Archaeology*, ed. Gwendolyn Wright, Studies in the History of Art, Center for Advanced Studies in the Visual Arts (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1996), p. 74. Ironically, the extraction of works like these has also accounted for the survival and preservation of monuments and artifacts that in some cases would otherwise have perished.

9. Edward W. Said, *Representations of the Intellectual* (New York: Random House, 1994), p. 21.

10. Ibid., p. 30.

11. For an overview of these debates, see Warren I. Cohen, *East Asian Art and American Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), pp. 155–233.

12. Oleg Grabar, "Reflections on the Study of Islamic Art," in *Muqarnas* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 1–14.

13. In the words of K. Anthony Appiah, "The art world has denizens whose work is to challenge every definition of art, to push us beyond every boundary, to stand outside and move beyond every attempt to fix art's meaning. Any definition of art now is a provocation." "The Arts of Africa," *New York Review of Books*, April 24, 1997, p. 48. I would like to thank Lucia Pierce for bringing this article to my attention. Also see recent debates on issues such as interdisciplinarity and rethinking the canon in *Art Bulletin* 77, no. 4 (December 1995): 534–51; *Art Bulletin* 78, no. 2 (June 1996): 198–217. For questions raised by the concept of "quality," see Michael Brenson, "Quality and Other Things," *American Art* 6, no. 4 (Fall 1992): 2–16.

14. *The Second Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art* (Brisbane: Queensland Art Gallery, 1996); Poshyananda et al., *Contemporary Art in Asia*. Fascination with the nature and meaning of materials, as well as the idea of softer boundaries between "art" and "craft," has traditionally been dimly viewed in high Euro-American culture, while the opposite is true, for example, in Japan. See Janet Koplos, "Who Has It Best — the Japanese or American?" *Studio Potter*, December 1992, pp. 27–28.

15. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal, introduction to *The Cultures of Collecting*, ed. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 1.

16. Ibid., pp. 4–5.

17. Jean Baudrillard, "The System of Collecting," in ibid., pp. 7–24.

18. Ibid., p. 12.

19. The word itself originally had no connotation of collecting or the storage of material. It came into usage in part through its association with its classical past, but primarily because of its ability to summon up liberal, humanist, and conceptual possibilities "through which the world surrounding man and his place in it might be understood." See Pearce, *Museums, Objects, and Collections*, p. 17.

20. Joy Kenseth, "The Age of the Marvelous: An Introduction," in *The Age of the Marvelous*, ed. Joy Kenseth (Hanover, N.H.: Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, 1991), p. 27; Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor, eds., *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985). Of special relevance in this last collection of essays are Julian Raby, "Exotica from Islam," pp. 251–58; John Ayers, "The Early China Trade," pp. 259–66; Oliver Impey, "Japan: Trade and Collecting in Seventeenth-Century Europe," pp. 267–73; Robert Skelton, "Indian Art and Artefacts in Early European Collecting," pp. 274–80.

21. The term *Kunstkammer* is often ascribed to the collections, although what today would be recognized as works of art played a relatively small role. Only in the latter part of the seventeenth century was a perceptible trend toward the formation of specialized collections of art evident. See Arthur MacGregor, "Collectors and Collections of Rarities in the Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Centuries," in *Tradescant's Rarities: Essays on the Foundation of the Ashmolean Museum (1683) with a Catalogue of the Surviving Early Collections*, ed. Arthur MacGregor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. 73.

22. Ibid., pp. 70–97.

23. Pearce, *Museums, Objects, and Collections*, p. 98.

24. Ibid., pp. 109–13.

25. See the example of Marcel Broodthaers as described in Nicholas Serota, *Experience or Interpretation: The Dilemma of Museums of Modern Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996), p. 38.

26. Pearce, *Museums, Objects, and Collections*, p. 114.

27. Ibid., p. 116.

28. Thomas Lawton and Linda Merrill, *Freer: A Legacy of Art* (Washington, D.C., and New York: Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution in association with and Harry N. Abrams, 1993).

29. Arthur M. Sackler, M.D., "Clay and Civilization," in *Art of Costa Rica: Pre-Columbian Painted and Sculpted Ceramics from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections* (Washington, D.C. : Arthur M. Sackler Foundation and AMS Foundation for the Arts, Sciences and Humanities, 1985), pp. 7–9.

30. Ibid., p. 7.

31. Miranda McClintic, "The Arthur M. Sackler Gallery at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.," *Studio International: Dr. Arthur M. Sackler Special Issue* 200, supp. 1 (1987): 70.

32. Arthur M. Sackler, "On the Issues and Answers," October 5, 1997, *One Man and Medicine: Selected Weekly Columns (1972–1983) by the International Publisher of Medical Tribune* (New York: Medical Tribune, Inc., 1983), pp. 240–41. I would like to thank Miriam Kent of the Arthur M. Sackler Foundation for bringing this publication to my attention.

33. Arthur M. Sackler, "Research and Recognition of Findings," July 2, 1980, in ibid., p. 121.

34. Arthur M. Sackler, "Why," May 25, 1983, in ibid., pp. 203–5.

35. Arthur M. Sackler, "On Fingerprints of the Artist," April 22, 1981, in ibid., pp. 314–15.

36. Arthur M. Sackler, "The Hunter Brothers: William and John," December 12, 1973, in ibid., p. 136.

37. Ibid., pp. 137–39.

38. Pratapaditya Pal, ed., *American Collections of Asian Art* (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1986).

39. For example, the Sackler Gallery currently holds 139 Chinese jades assembled by the British collector Desmond Gure as well as eighty-two archaic Chinese jades that had once belonged to the A.W. Bahr collection, Weybridge, England. I am indebted to Dr. Thomas Lawton, former director, and Dr. Jenny So, curator of ancient Chinese art, both of the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, for bringing this information to my attention. Contrary to popular perception, Freer himself also from time to time purchased large groups of objects from other collectors, such as the eighty-two pieces of superb Koryo celadon acquired in 1907 from Dr. Horace Allen, a longtime resident of Korea as both a medical missionary and United States diplomat. See Ann Yonemura, "A Pioneer Collection of Korean Art," *Apollo* 118, no. 258 (August 1983): 150–52.

40. Michael Spens, introduction to *Studio International: Dr. Arthur M. Sackler Special Issue* 200, supp. 1 (1987): 10.

41. Statement by Arthur M. Sackler, in ibid., p. 14.

42. Angela E. Couloumbis, "It's Just Not Bad Karma and Sacred Cows," *Washington Post*, May 8, 1996, pp. H1–H5; Kanti Tripathi, "Puja: A Unique Exhibition," *Indian Perspectives*, November 1996, pp. 31–34; Sanjeev Anand, "A Divine Display," *India Today*, September 15, 1996, pp. 64h–65i; Holland Cotter, "Indian Icons in All Their Fine Clothes," *New York Times*, June 30, 1996, p. 28.

43. Duncan, "Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship," p. 91.

44. Svetlana Alpers, "The Museum as a Way of Seeing," in *Exhibiting Cultures*, p. 29.

45. Ibid., p. 30.

46. See Louise Allison Cort and Nakamura Kenji, *A Basketmaker in Rural Japan* (Washington, D.C., and New York: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, in association with Weatherhill, 1994).

47. Masao Yamaguchi, "The Poetics of Exhibition in Japanese Culture," in *Exhibiting Cultures*, pp. 60, 67.

48. Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 14–19.

49. Stephen Greenblatt, "Resonance and Wonder," in *Exhibiting Cultures*, p. 42.

50. Ivan Karp, "Culture and Representation," in *Exhibiting Cultures*, pp. 17–18.

51. Ibid., pp. 18–19.

52. Greenblatt, "Resonance and Wonder," pp. 42–43.

53. Ibid., p. 43.

54. Thomas McEvilley, "Exhibition Strategies in the Postcolonial Era," in *Contemporary Art in Asia*, pp. 54–56. McEvilley notes that these interpretations have also ultimately perpetuated the notion that "reason" is characteristic of the modern West, while "feeling" is the characteristic trait of the rest of the world. A somewhat similar but different argument is made about the study of Indian art in the West, where current theoretical approaches, particularly those that regard religious thinking as suspect, often resemble earlier colonialist efforts in their attempts to "demystify" works from sacred contexts. See Holland Cotter, "Eastern Art Through Western Eyes," *New York Times*, June 10, 1994, p. 29.

55. McEvilley, "Exhibition Strategies in the Postcolonial Era," pp. 58–59. Elsewhere McEvilley has pointed to an emerging global scenario with no one dominant and enforced culture but instead "one culture made of many cultures." See Thomas McEvilley, "One Culture of Many Cultures," in *Art and Otherness: Crisis in Cultural Identity* (Kingston, N.Y.: Documentext, McPherson and Company, 1992), p. 132.

56. Lawrence Weschler, *Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1995), p. 40. The construction of a postmodern *Wunderkammer*, together with its attendant commentary on classification systems, the organization of knowledge, and the institution of the museum, was presented at the Wexner Center for the Arts in "Mark Dion: Cabinet of Curiosities," May 10–August 10, 1997, curated by William J. Horrigan. See Mark Dion, *Theatrum Mundi* (Köln: Salon Verlag, 1997).

57. Kenseth, *Age of the Marvelous*, pp. 54–55.

58. Alan Wallach, "Museums and Resistance to History," *Chronicle of Higher Learning*, September 21, 1994, p. B3. Wallach argues that the public needs to be more accepting of the idea that "whatever else they may be, works of art are historical artifacts — an idea that flies in the face of all that art museums have hitherto stood for."

59. Baudrillard, "The System of Collecting," p. 10.

60. See also Appiah, "Arts of Africa," pp. 48–51, for similar conclusions about the display of African art in the West, and Alan Wallach, "The Battle over *The West As America*," in *Art Apart: Art Institutions and Ideology Across England and North America*, ed. Marcia Pointon (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp. 89–101.

61. T. McEvilley, "Opening the Trap" in *Art and Otherness*, pp. 67–68.

62. Richard Feynman, as quoted in Weschler, *Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder*, p. 90.

63. See Tony Capaccio and Uday Mohan, "Missing the Target: How the Media Mishandled the Smithsonian *Enola Gay* Controversy," *American Jonrnalism Review* (July/August 1995): 19–26, where the authors argue that genuine and long-standing historical debate among scholars was brushed aside by political and nationalistic concerns; Smithsonian Institution Official Memorandum from I. Michael Heyman, Secretary, to the Regents of the Smithsonian, November 6, 1996, where it is noted that contemporary art, despite its often controversial or offensive nature, will continue to be shown at the Smithsonian.

64. Serota, *Experience or Interpretation*, pp. 54–55. See also Dave Hickey, *The Invisible Dragon: Four Essays on Beauty* (Los Angeles: Art issues. Press, 1993); Ann Wiens, "Gorgeous Politics, Dangerous Pleasure: An Interview with Dave Hickey," *New Art Examiner*, April 1994, pp. 12–17, where an argument is made not only for beauty and its attendant sensations as the driving force behind works of art but for a restoration of aesthetics to contemporary theory and criticism. In an exhibition of Indian art shown in both Paris and San Francisco, B. N. Goswamy emphasized as a viewing principle the concept of *rasa* (aesthetic delight), the experience the Indian viewer has traditionally associated with much of Indian art and for which art is regarded as the vehicle, leading the viewer back to original context and intention. See B. N. Goswamy, *Rasa: Les neuf visages de l'art indien* (Paris: Galeries nationales du Grandes Palais, 1986); B.N. Goswamy, *Essence of Indian Art* (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 1986).

65.Greenblatt, "Resonance and Wonder," p. 49. A persuasive argument for bringing to works of art in museums a "cultural surround," particularly one cognizant of the processes by which objects were made, can be found in a paper by W. Richard West Jr., "The National Museum of the American Indian: Whence the Art Object," delivered at the annual meeting of the Association of Art Museum Directors, June 16, 1995. The continuing importance of connoisseurship, albeit one tempered by rigorous scholarship, is advanced by Sherman E. Lee, "The Freer's Studies in Connoisseurship," *Art Journal* 44 (Spring 1984): 65–70.

Aquisitions

Note to the Reader

Dimensions are given in centimeters; height precedes width unless otherwise indicated. Japanese and Chinese names are given surname first.

Ancient Near East

Four vessels

Iran, Late Bronze Age (2400–1350 B.C.),
Iron Age I-III (1350–500 B.C.)
Ceramic
S1998.21–.24

These four vessels are among the collection of over one hundred ancient Near Eastern ceramic objects presented to the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery jointly by Mr. and Mrs. Osborne Hauge and Mr. and Mrs. Victor Hauge, in honor of the museum's tenth anniversary. Acquired in Iran during the 1950s and 1960s, the collection is distinguished not only by its large size but also by its high quality and wide chronological range. With examples spanning nearly six thousand years of ceramic production primarily in western Iran, the Hauges' collection richly documents the region's major ceramic traditions together with the distinctive repertory of shapes and forms of decoration. This exceptional group complements the ancient Iranian ceramics in the gallery's permanent collection and the tenth anniversary gift offered by Joan and Frank Mount (see S1994.12, .15, .28). Four vessels donated by Mr. and Mrs. Osborne Hauge illustrate important styles in both painted and monochrome ceramic traditions of western Iran during the second and first millennia B.C.

Among the earliest preserved styles of painted pottery in western and southwestern Iran, dating to the fourth millennium B.C., is a style featuring a limited repertory of geometric and figural ornament in brown paint on a light ground.[1] Around 2000 B.C., wares reprising this color scheme enjoyed considerable popularity in western Iran, especially in the area of modern Luristan. Examples of this style, often termed "Buff Painted Ware," have been recovered from tombs and habitation areas at several sites, most notably Tepe Giyan and Godin Tepe.[2] Preferred shapes include globular jars made in generous sizes. A jar in the Hauges' collection (no. 1) bears surface decoration in a matte beige slip punctuated at rim and shoulder with dark brown painted zones. The ornament consists of several motifs characteristic of this style: water birds executed in silhouette, with eyes in outline; stacked chevrons; and a "flame" ornament in silhouette. In the most successful products of this painted style, as here, the artisan achieved an almost perfect dynamic correspondence between shape and decoration. Concentric zones of decoration encircle the rim and body, carrying the eye around the vessel and emphasizing its volume. The placement of the repeated motifs varies from register to register, thereby avoiding a static, vertical stacking of patterns. Animate forms also give the illusion of movement: on this jar, the highly schematic birds appear to be taking flight from the surface of the water.

Brown-on-beige painted wares were also popular in western Iran during the subsequent Iron Age (1350–500 B.C.). Cemeteries and settlements in the Luristan region have yielded examples of a well-defined painted style dating principally to the eighth and seventh centuries B.C.[3] A fine

1 (above) Vessel, Iran, Late Bronze Age (2400–1350 B.C.), ceramic, height 23.4, diameter 21.8 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, gift of Osborne and Gratia Hauge, S1998.21

2 Vessel, Iran, Iron Age I-III (1350–500 B.C.), ceramic, height 30.4, diameter 31.0 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, gift of Osborne and Gratia Hauge, S1998.22

GIFT OF OSBORNE AND GRATIA HAUGE
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specimen is in the Hauges' collection (no. 2). Painted ornament in brown or red typically consists of a few recurring motifs, including hatched "kites" (as here), arranged in a zone across the upper half of the vessel. The asymmetrical design of the handles typifies the often whimsical approach to ceramic decoration in ancient Iran. One handle is stirrup-shaped; the other takes the form of a small quadruped who appears to climb up the shoulder toward the rim.

In parallel with these painted ceramic styles, a remarkable monochrome ceramic tradition flourished in ancient Iran. Conservative in technique, this tradition consisted largely of handmade and slab-built forms fashioned in a limited repertory of highly distinctive shapes inspired in form, color, and surface treatment by metal prototypes. Recovered primarily from tombs in northern and northwestern Iran, these shapes were produced in gray and red wares. Surviving examples show that colors ranged from black to light gray and red to dark brown, with surfaces typically compacted through burnishing to yield a lustrous, reflective appearance betraying their metallic inspiration. Unlike the region around modern Luristan, where both cemeteries and habitation sites have been sampled, the area southwest of the Caspian Sea is known archaeologically almost exclusively from vast cemeteries whose tombs have most frequently been opened during clandestine, unrecorded excavations. One of the most important sources of Iron Age monochrome ceramics in northern Iran is the site of Marlik, where excavations in 1961 and 1962 uncovered rich tombs containing metalwork, ceramic vessels, glass, and other finds.[4] Among a number of examples in the Hauges' collection, two shown here illustrate characteristic shapes and surface treatment and complement neatly the range exemplified in the gift of ancient Iranian ceramics presented to the Sackler Gallery by Joan and Frank Mount. A beak-spouted vessel (no. 3) illustrates one of the most arresting of shapes created by ancient Iranian artisans. This particular example has survived in virtually perfect condition. The gray, lustrous surface was probably intended to suggest the color and appearance of tarnished silver. A large red-brown jar with a band handle from rim to shoulder (no. 4), its surfaces heavily burnished, represents the red wares in the monochrome tradition. These two vessels show the range of colors and surface treatment achieved by careful manipulation of firing temperatures and conditions in the production of red and gray wares. As with the painted examples, considerable technical sophistication lies behind the apparent simplicity of form and decoration.

The Arthur M. Sackler Gallery reaps immediate benefits from the addition of this extraordinarily generous gift to its permanent collections, one that will continue to furnish many opportunities for research, exhibition, and publication.

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3 (left) Vessel, Iran, Iron Age I–II (ca. 1350–500 B.C.), ceramic, height 18.4, length 37 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, gift of Osborne and Connie Hauge, S1998.23

4 Vessel, Iran, Iron Age I–II (ca. 1350–500 B.C.), ceramic, height 36, diameter 29 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Osborne Hauge, S1998.24

NOTES

1. Trudy S. Kawami, *Ancient Iranian Ceramics from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections* (New York: Arthur M. Sackler Foundation and Harry N. Abrams, 1992), pp. 12–14, with further references.

2. Robert C. Henrickson, "The Chronology of Central Western Iran, 2600–1400 B.C.," *American Journal of Archaeology* 89 (1985): 569–81.

3. Kawami, *Ancient Iranian Ceramics*, pp. 28–29, also no. 67, with further references.

4. Ezat O. Negahban, *Marlik: The Complete Excavation Report*, University Museum Monograph 87 (Philadelphia: University Museum, 1996).

Three vessels

Iran, Iron Age I-II (ca. 1350–800 B.C.)
Ceramic
S1994.12, S1994.15, S1995.128

These three objects belong to a collection of thirty-seven ceramic vessels and figurines donated to the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery by Joan and Frank Mount.[1] Acquired by the Mounts between 1965 and 1967, this tenth anniversary gift both expands and complements the ceramic holdings that formed one of the core collections of ancient Near Eastern art when the museum opened in 1987. It more than doubles the ancient Iranian ceramics in the museum's permanent collection, making available many new examples for exhibition, technical and art historical research, and publication. Among these ceramic documents are early examples of long-lived artistic and iconographic traditions in ancient Iran, such as vessels formed in part or entirely in the shape of an animal. This tradition continued into the Parthian (ca. 250 B.C.–A.D. 224) and Sasanian periods (ca. 224–651), as splendidly represented in examples made of silver in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery's collection.

Ranging in date from the second millennium B.C. to the second century A.D., most of the works in the Mounts' collection can be tied to ceramic styles of northern and northwestern Iran by comparison with material unearthed in scientific excavations. Among them is a group probably made in northern Iran in the late second and early first millennium B.C., the period known in archaeological terms as the Iron Age (ca. 1350–500 B.C.). During this period, a conservative yet highly skilled ceramic industry flourished in the lush region of today's Gilan Province northwest of Tehran, between the northern slopes of the Elburz Mountains and the southwestern shores of the Caspian Sea. Archaeologists have uncovered few remains of settlements in this area, suggesting that dwellings were constructed primarily of timber and other perishable materials. Evidence for occupation and cultural history comes instead from a number of cemeteries that yielded numerous examples of well-preserved ceramic and metal artifacts buried with the deceased. Most of the objects derive from uncontrolled excavations and therefore furnish no information for determining date, regional source, or archaeological context. Scientific excavations in 1961 and 1962 at the site of Marlik, southwest of the Caspian Sea, uncovered rich burials whose excavated contexts provide key information on the date and function of many ceramic vessels that lack archaeological provenance.[2]

The Mounts' collection illustrates richly the superb quality and engaging shapes achieved by potters working in this important ceramic tradition. Distinguished by monochrome, highly burnished wares fashioned into simple, elegant shapes, most vessels are handmade, often with astonishing precision and uniformly thin walls; occasionally vessels or parts of vessels, such as spouts, may be wheel-formed. Shapes are often whimsical, sometimes alluding to images of animals or more explicitly evoking recognizable species. The aesthetic sensibilities governing the potter's craft in this period were also influenced deeply by the forms and decorative approaches of metal vessels, which clearly served as models for many of the finest class of ceramic vessels. The excavations at Marlik uncovered tombs containing metal vessels deposited together with examples of the ceramic versions they inspired, demonstrating close links between these media in shapes, colors, decorative details, and surface treatment. In other instances, even when specific metal prototypes are not preserved, clues to an origin in metalwork often survive in the ceramic versions. One clue is the common practice of burnishing, the smoothing of the surface with a pebble or other simple tool before the vessel is completely dry to achieve a lustrous, almost metallic sheen after firing. Another bow to metal prototypes are the colors of the ceramic vessels, reflecting the manipulation of firing conditions to produce red, brown, or gray wares. As often observed, these wares most likely represent attempts to reproduce the colors and gleaming surfaces of bronze, gold, and silver.

One of the most striking of ceramic shapes translated from contemporary fashions in metalwork is the beak-spouted vessel, which enjoyed considerable popularity in ancient Iran in both monochrome and painted versions. An example from the Mounts' gift, slipped and burnished a lustrous reddish brown, displays the characteristic spout metamorphosed into a bird's beak (no. 1). Metal prototypes of this distinctive shape are preserved in versions made of silver, silver and gold, and bronze, which were found in tombs probably contemporaneous with those containing ceramic counterparts.[3]

A vessel composed of joined twin juglets of fine black ware represents another distinctive shape for which metal ancestors may be suspected (no. 2). Such joined or compound vessels seem alien to the traditional ceramic repertory, and most probably followed metal prototypes. Similar objects, also made in fine, dark wares with lustrous surfaces, have been recovered from the rich burials at Marlik.[4]

One of the most characteristic ceramic forms of Iron Age northern Iran is a hollow vessel fashioned in the shape of an animal. Both scientific excavations and the antiquities market have brought to light many examples of rams, mules, and other species. A humped bull, or zebu, of reddish brown clay, is equipped with crescent-shaped horns, ears, stubby legs, and a muzzle that projects as a beaklike spout (no. 3). Hollow vessels in the form of a humped bull with pouring spout were characteristic ceramic objects found in the cemetery at Marlik.[5] The importance of this animal to the region, as indicated by the large quantity of ceramic vessels of this shape, is reinforced by its repeated occurrence in objects made of more costly materials, such as bronze. Small bronze figurines in the form of humped bulls were often pierced or furnished with a small loop for suspension, perhaps to be worn as amulets.[6] Since portable metal versions that could have fulfilled amuletic purposes were available,

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1 Vessel, Iran, Iron Age I–II (ca. 1350–800 B.C.), ceramic, height 25.7, length 40.1 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, gift of Joan and Frank Mount, S1994.15

the large, hollow ceramic bulls probably served another function, one that required the pouring of liquids presumably in ritual circumstances.

The possible function of the bull vessels raises the question of the purpose and meaning of other ceramic objects from this period. A tall, ovoid version of the beak-spouted jars prompted the excavator of Marlik to wonder whether the shape would have been practical for daily use. The long spout and tall body, he observed, yield an elegant but unstable shape, and he suggested that these vessels may have been manufactured exclusively for funerary use.[7] Other shapes in the early Iron Age repertory are likewise unstable and impractical, such as the joined twin juglets (see no. 2). Determining the function of these vessels is difficult even when their archaeological context is known because they have been recovered almost exclusively from burials; the ceramic repertory of contemporary households is therefore unknown. Perhaps the objects were buried with their owners simply because they were prized personal possessions. The unusual shapes of the vessels strongly suggest, however, that some were employed in burial rituals or had specific funerary associations.

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Ann C. Gunter, "A Collection of Ancient Iranian Ceramics," *Oriental Art* 43, no. 3 (Autumn 1997): 25–30, figs. 1, 9, 13.

NOTES

1. Ann C. Gunter, "A Collection of Ancient Iranian Ceramics," *Oriental Art* 43, no. 3 (Autumn 1997): 25–30.

2. Ezat O. Negahban, *Marlik: The Complete Excavation Report,* University Museum Monograph 87 (Philadelphia: University Museum, 1996).

3. Ibid., pp. 85–86.

4. Ibid., nos. 533, 534. See also Trudy S. Kawami, *Ancient Iranian Ceramics from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections* (New York: Arthur M. Sackler Foundation and Harry N. Abrams, 1992), pp. 24–25.

5. Negahban, *Marlik*, pp. 116–20, nos. 83–128.

6. Ibid., pp. 126–28.

7. Ibid., p. 242.

2 Vessel, Iran, Iron Age I-II (ca. 1350–800 B.C.), ceramic, height 12.7, length 16.4 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, gift of Joan and Frank Mount, [illegible]

3 Vessel, Iran, Iron Age 1-II (ca. 1350–800 B.C.)
ceramic, height 22.2, length 35.0 cm. Arthur M.
Sackler Gallery, gift of Joan and Frank Mouat
1995.128

Lobed bowl

Central Asia, region of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan, 7th–8th century
Silver
Height 4.8, diameter 15.3 cm
F1997.13

In the region of fabled Samarkand, known in ancient times as Sogdia, an important culture flourished in the sixth to eighth centuries along the Silk Route, which linked Europe, the Near East, and China in a lucrative trade. Excavations in the former Soviet Central Asian republics since the 1940s have uncovered the architecture, wall painting, ceramics, and metalwork of these eastern Iranian peoples and their merchant towns.[1] Sogdian artistic achievements display close links in style, type, and theme with traditions of Parthian and Sasanian Iran, yet preserve important differences. A secular trend in the art and architecture of Sogdia distinguishes this tradition from that of Hindu and Buddhist India as well as the official court art of Sasanian Iran. Among the themes represented in the seventh- and eighth-century wall paintings from Panjikent, near Samarkand, are scenes from a heroic cycle interpreted as a Sogdian version of the Iranian epic tradition best known from Firdawsi's *Shahnama* (Book of kings).[2] These investigations have enabled scholars to classify many objects from the region that were exported in ancient times over a wide area of Asia, some found at considerable distances from their workshops of origin.

This silver bowl belongs to a Sogdian school of metalwork that drew on traditions of Sasanian Iran but developed its own distinctive features of shape, decoration, and style.[3] Formed of twelve lobes, the shallow bowl rests on a low ring foot made separately and attached by soldering. The decoration of the lion and the pearl medallion enclosing it were formed using repoussé, with details added by chasing. The simple, low relief of the decoration is typical of this school, contrasting with the high, often gilded, relief of Sasanian silver vessels.[4] On the exterior of one lobe is a simple, scratched inscription, perhaps in a Turkic script, that was probably made by an early owner. Within the foot ring are traces of a second inscription, too illegible for the script to be determined. Surface analysis revealed that the silver is alloyed with copper; among the trace elements, lead and zinc are present in quantities greater than is typical for Sasanian silver vessels.[5]

This bowl was formerly owned by the Swedish collector Carl Kempe, who assembled a major collection of Tang dynasty (618–907) precious metalware and porcelain between the 1930s and 1950s. The superb collections of Sasanian and Tang silver in the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery form an ideal context for this object, which forges new links between these major traditions of precious metalware. Sasanian silver bowls with fluted, lobelike exterior decoration and an interior central medallion enclosing an animal are represented in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery.[6] No other collection in the United States houses examples of Sogdian silver vessels.

The bowl exemplifies the kinds of portable luxury arts favored by the thriving merchant society of Sogdia: works fashioned from valuable materials and decorated in an international style that appealed to this wealthy, cosmopolitan class. Bowls made of precious metal, decorated with an interior central medallion enclosing an animal figure, were common to the luxury arts of an elite stratum from the Roman and Byzantine worlds to China. The image of the lion likewise illustrates this rich internationalism. A royal symbol of immense antiquity in Mesopotamia and Iran, the lion also evoked, in Central Asia and China, images of India and Buddhism. The roar of the animal was a well-known metaphor for the voice of the Buddha instructing all beings in his law.[7]

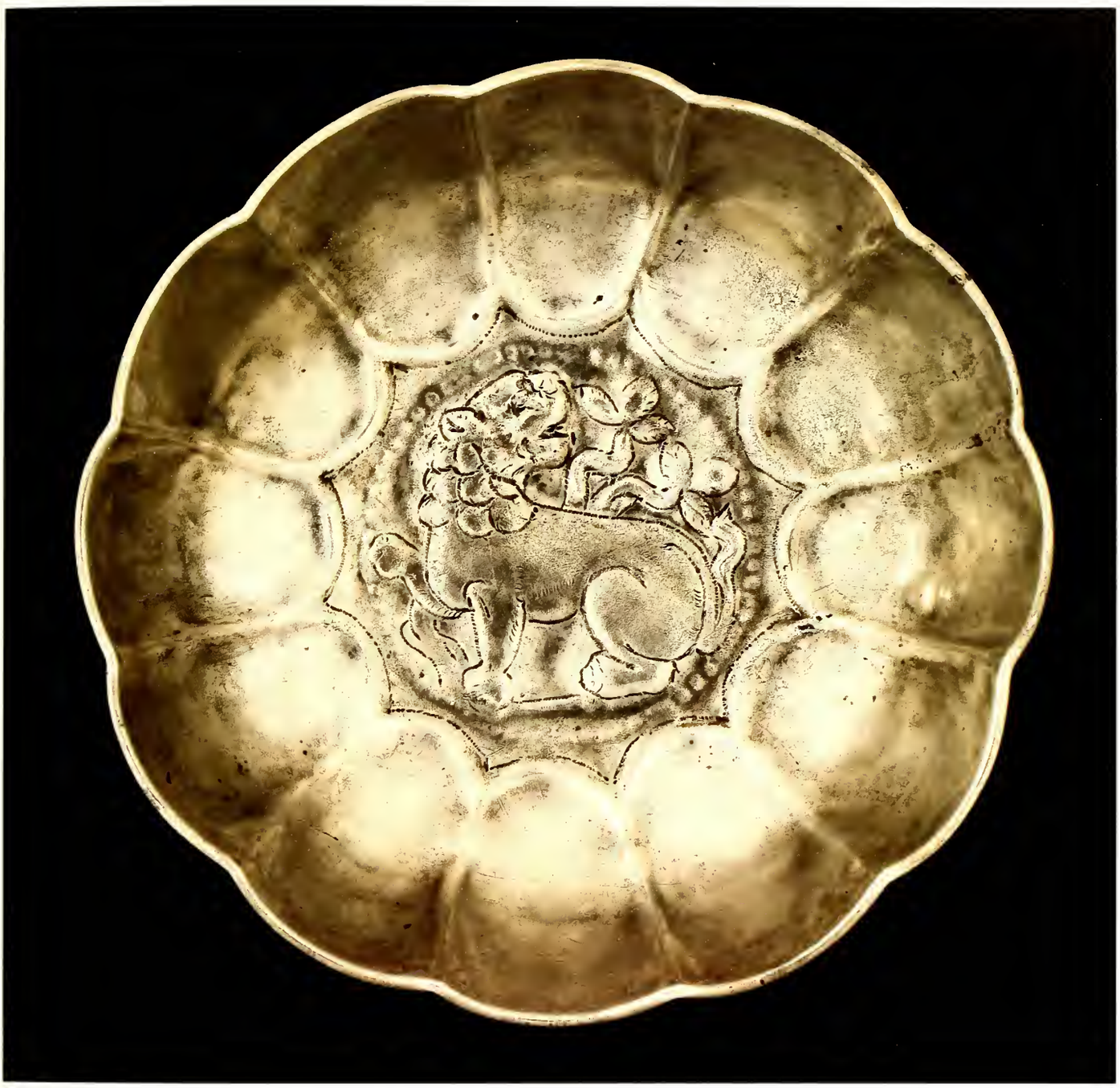
The bowl was allegedly found in the eastern Tang capital of Luoyang. While its place of origin cannot be verified, a source in China is consonant with archaeological evidence for traveling or resident Sogdians. Tombs of a family of Sogdians, dating to the Sui (581–618) and Tang dynasties, were excavated at Guyuan, Ninxia Province, between 1982 and 1987. Their contents included Sasanian and Byzantine coins, seals, and glass vessels, demonstrating that prized personal possessions often traveled with their owners over considerable distances.[8] Sogdians are represented among the Tang ceramic tomb figurines, and Chinese written sources testify to lively commercial and cultural contacts between these regions during the seventh century.[9]

Ann C. Gunter

PUBLISHED

Bo Gyllensvärd, "T'ang Gold and Silver," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* (Stockholm) 29, no. 2 (1957): fig. 70:u; Boris Marschak, *Silberschätze des Orients: Metallkunst des 3.–13. Jahrhunderts und ihre Kontinuität* (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann Verlag, 1986), p. 67, fig. 69.

PURCHASE
FREER GALLERY OF ART
75TH ANNIVERSARY



NOTES

1. Guitty Azarpay, *Sogdian Painting* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981), provides an overview of Sogdian history together with detailed studies of wall paintings from major sites.

2. Ibid., with further references. Jerome F. Clinton, *The Tragedy of Sohrab and Rostam* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987), is a recent prose translation of the *Shahnama*.

3. Boris Marschak, *Silberschätze des Orients: Metallkunst des 3.–13. Jahrhunderts und ihre Kontinuität* (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann Verlag, 1986), pp. 39–95.

4. Ann C. Gunter and Paul Jett, *Ancient Iranian Metalwork in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and the Freer Gallery of Art* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1992), nos. 21, 24.

5. Janet Douglas and Paul Jett, Department of Conservation and Scientific Research, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, conducted this analysis using X-ray fluorescence spectrometry.

6. Gunter and Jett, *Ancient Iranian Metalwork*, nos. 19, 21, 16.

7. Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of T'ang Exotics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963), pp. 84–87.

8. Luo Feng, *Gnyuan nanjiao Sui Tang mudi* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1996).

9. Jane Gaston Mahler, *The Westerners Among the Figurines of the T'ang Dynasty of China* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1959), pp. 68–71, plate XIIC; Schafer, *Golden Peaches of Samarkand*.

Art of the Islamic World

Fragment of a Koran

North Africa or Near East, 9th century
Ink, color, and gold on parchment
8.0 x 12.4 cm
F1997.27.1–.23ab

This remarkable manuscript fragment, a rare example of a miniature Koran in the kufic script, is datable to the ninth century. Its intimate size suggests it was probably intended as a personal or travel copy. Obviously admired during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the fragmentary manuscript is set in a lacquer binding decorated with a sprig of daffodils, attributable to Iran.

Written in an extremely fine and uniform kufic script in brown ink, the fragment is devoted to parts of suras 6 (Cattle) and 7 (Heights). Red dots serve to indicate the vowels, while discrete verse markers, highlighted with touches of color, appear at the end of some but not all the verses. As is typical of the kufic writing style, reserved exclusively for the copying of Islam's holy text, generous and uniform spaces separate each word and letter, relieving the density of the script. Estelle Whalen has aptly remarked that "the typical early Qur'an is not written in words and phrases: It is written in groups of connected letters separated by spaces." Although this feature results in a measured, unhurried, and spacious style, it also diminishes the script's legibility.[1] To mark the transition from one chapter to the next, the title of the seventh sura is written in larger, elongated gold letters and is further enhanced by an elegant palmette in the margin. This type of heading probably represents the precursor to sura titles set in illuminated rectangles, also often terminating with a palmette in the margin.[2]

The Koran fragment concludes with a full-page illumination. Such folios would appear at the beginning, the end, or between text sections, usually as facing double pages. In the Abbasid period (750–1258), the illuminated designs comprised geometric shapes within the central field, embellished with ornamental marginal devices, primarily palmettes and other vegetal motifs, as is evident from this miniature example. The frequent inclusion of frontispieces and finispieces in Korans after the ninth century confirms not only the growing significance of illumination as a device for marking text divisions but also as the predominant means for beautifying and embellishing the sacred text.

Exemplifying the refinement and sophistication of early Arabic writing, this Koran fragment is an important addition to the collection of the Freer Gallery of Art, already renowned for its kufic Koran folios.[3] The manuscript's superb calligraphy and fine illumination rival some of the finest ninth-century examples, while its intimate scale, the first work of this size at the Freer, provides a perfect foil for the appreciation of the larger and more common ninth- and tenth-century Korans.

Massumeh Farhad

NOTES

1. Estelle Whalen, "Writing the Word of God: Some Early Qur'an Manuscripts and Their Milieux," part 1, *Ars Orientalis* 20 (1990): 114.

2. For a celebrated example from the Freer collection (F30.60r), see Esin Atil, *Art of the Arab World* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1975), no. 3.

3. For illustrations, see ibid., plates 1–7.

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3. For illustrations, see ibid., plates 1–7.

PURCHASE
FREER GALLERY OF ART
75TH ANNIVERSARY

Ceramics

Iran, Iraq, 9th–14th centuries
S1997.108–.130

The joint gift of Osborne and Gratia Hauge and Victor and Takako Hauge includes twenty-three ceramic vessels from Iran and Iraq. Ranging in date from the ninth to the early twentieth century, this important collection includes a large repertory of shapes and styles — from a molded and gilded star tile of the thirteenth century to a series of simple but boldly designed early-twentieth-century beehive covers. Among the collection's great strengths is a group of vessels and tiles inspired by Chinese porcelains and decorative motifs known in the Islamic world since at least the ninth century. Representing different periods, traditions, and functions, these wares reflect the continuous artistic dialogues between the Islamic world and China that resulted in some of the most complex and visually compelling vessels ever produced.

One of the earliest such works belongs to a group of ninth–tenth century cream- or gray-colored bowls from Iraq and Iran. To approximate the white body of imported Tang porcelain, potters added tin oxide to lead glaze, which lent the buff-colored body of the vessel a "porcelainlike" appearance. James W. Allan has pointed out that these type of wares further affirm the importance of long distance trade in Near Eastern ceramic production, for, with no tin mines in the region, the metal was imported by sea from as far as Malaysia and southern Burma.[1]

Some of the wares were left undecorated, but many were embellished primarily in cobalt blue with vegetal, geometric, and epigraphic designs. Written in the kufic script, these inscriptions represent the first systematic use of writing as the principal decorative device — a phenomenon of unparalleled significance in the visual arts and architecture of the Islamic world. Absorbed into the glaze like "ink on snow,"[2] the short inscriptions usually consist of pious invocations, good wishes, as well as the name of the potter as exemplified by the earthenware bowl (no. 1) that is part of this gift. The phrase *"amal-i al-Akhul [?]"* (the work of al-Akhul [?]) is placed in the very center of the bowl, serving not only as a decorative motif but also as an expression of the esteem and high repute of individual ninth-century potters. Finally, as the earliest example of blue-and-white ware, these vessels can also be regarded as the precursors to the tradition of Chinese blue-and-white porcelain and all its Asian and European imitations that have occupied such a central position in the history of world ceramics.

1

The so-called sgraffito ware, attributable to tenth-century Iran, is also believed to have been inspired by Chinese prototypes. Derived from the Italian word *sgraffire*, "to scratch," the term refers to the technique of incising designs into the thin clay slip that covers the vessel and allowing the buff body to show through. The vessel would then be decorated with tin glazes, such as copper green and iron brown. Frequently, the incised designs and color "splashes" do not line up, creating independent, almost haphazard designs. On the incised bowl (no. 2), however, the lines and color blocks are neatly integrated, creating a bold and unified geometric surface pattern. Considered less demanding in both technique and design than vessels embellished

GIFT OF OSBORNE AND GRATIA HAUGE
S1997.108–.125

GIFT OF VICTOR AND TAKAKO HAUGE
ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY
10TH ANNIVERSARY
S1997.126–.130

2

1 Bowl, Iraq or Iran, 9th–10th century, earthenware painted in blue over glaze, diameter 22.5 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, gift of Osborne and Gratia Hauge, S1997.109

2 Bowl, Iran, 9th–10th century, earthenware painted and incised over glaze, diameter 22.5 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, gift of Victor and Takako Hauge, S1997.128

with cobalt blue, sgraffito ware was greatly appreciated for its simple and spontaneous designs throughout much of the Islamic world until at least the twelfth century.

The technique of luster-painted ceramic, which originated in ninth-century Iraq and spread to the rest of the Islamic world and Europe, is considered one of the most important developments in the history of ceramics. As one of the most difficult techniques to control, luster had already been used on seventh-century Egyptian glass before Iraqi potters adapted it to earthenware to lend the low-fired clay surfaces the shimmering effect of precious metals. Vessels or tiles were first fired with an opaque white (tin) glaze, and the designs were then painted on the cold surface with a mixture of metal oxides, sulfur, and other materials. During a second firing, oxygen was drawn out of the metallic oxides, leaving behind a shiny film on the surface. This complex ceramic tradition spread from Iraq, Egypt, and Syria to Iran in the late eleventh century, where it reached new levels of technical and artistic sophistication during the Seljuq dynasty (1038–1194). The principal city associated with this technique was Kashan in central Iran, which also gave its name to the Persian term for tile, *kashi*. Adopted to utilitarian vessels, such as plates, bowls, and jugs, as well as tiles destined for both religious and secular structures, Persian lusterware often combined spontaneous cursive writing, usually poetry, with lively figural scenes.

A small bowl from the Hauge collection (no. 3) represents an early, somewhat unusual example. Painted in reserve in brown luster against a gray-blue ground, the figure of a harpy, the mythical human-headed bird, dominates the design. An illegible cursive inscription encircles the exterior.[3] Although it is common to find the back of vessels colored with a blue glaze, Oliver Watson has maintained that it is less usual to find an entire bowl covered with the same blue tone.[4] Based on the flaring shape of these bowls, probably inspired by Chinese prototypes, and their silhouetted design, Watson has dated similar examples to the last quarter of the twelfth century.[5]

The Mongol invasion in the mid-thirteenth century halted ceramic production in Kashan, but the interruption was only temporary and far less devastating than in other centers in Central Asia or Iraq. Many of the styles and techniques that had flourished prior to the Mongol incursion were resumed and further refined under the active patronage of the Il-khanid dynasty, the Turco-Mongol rulers of Iran (reigned 1256–1353). With the construction of numerous secular and religious buildings during this period, tile making in particular gained new impetus and enjoyed tremendous proliferation throughout the Il-khanid kingdom.

In addition to monochrome, polychrome, and luster-painted tiles, the Il-khanid potters produced another type, known as *lajavardina* (no. 4). Literally meaning "cobalt" in Persian, this term refers to a technique used for a group of tiles associated with Takht-e Sulayman, a palace built on the site of a Zoroastrian temple in northwestern Iran for Abaqa Khan (reigned 1265–82) during the 1270s. As the only excavated secular structure from this period, Takht-i Sulayman is invaluable for the understanding and dating of Il-khanid tiles. The discovery of kilns and tile molds on the palace grounds suggests that some were

made at the site. As is evident from the present example, *lajavardina* tiles were first molded and then glazed in turquoise, cobalt, and sometimes white. Highlighted with red, black, brown, white, and in particular gold, the tiles were then fired for a second time.[6] The eight-pointed star shape, one of the most popular Il-khanid tiles, was already in use during the Seljuq period. Such tiles were skillfully combined with cross-shaped ones to sheath entire walls of both secular and religious structures.[7]

Like much of Il-khanid art, the representation of a soaring phoenix among flamelike clouds was clearly inspired by Chinese sources. As subordinates to the Mongol Yuan rulers of China (1279–1368), the Il-khanids particularly encouraged close diplomatic and commercial ties between China and the Islamic world. Decorative motifs such as dragons, peonies, lotus flowers, and phoenixes were transmitted to Iran through textiles, ceramics, paintings, and other trade goods. Serving as a new source of inspiration for Il-khanid artists, these decorative elements were incorporated into the Persian artistic language and in many instances became entirely Persianized; the Chinese phoenix, for instance, became assimilated with the *simurgh*, the mythical bird from the Persian national epic, the *Shahnama* (Book of kings).[8]

Another example of Il-khanid chinoiserie is evident in a bowl, datable to the early fourteenth century (no. 5). Decorated with a stylized floral design centered on a lotus flower, the vessel bears the hallmarks of a type of ware erroneously attributed to Sultanabad in western Iran and often referred to by that name.[9] In addition to the Chinese-inspired decoration, the shape of the vessel, characterized by a small foot ring and flaring sides, echoes that of Chinese celadon bowls imported to Iran in the fourteenth century. At the time same, however, fourteenth-century artists adapted Chinese shapes and decorative motifs according to the Persian aesthetic taste, creating a new and different visual language that became synonymous with Il-khanid artistic innovation and genius.

This important gift allows the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery to establish for the first

5

3 Bowl, Iran, [illegible] 13th century, [illegible] body, painted over glaze with [illegible], diameter 17.0 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, gift in honor of [illegible] and Gratia Hauge, s1997.1[illegible]

4 Star-shaped tile, Iran, second half of 13th century, molded [illegible] body, painted and gilded over glaze, [illegible] cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, gift of Osborne and [illegible] Hauge, s1997.114

5 Bowl, Iran, early 14th century, [illegible] body, painted under glaze, diameter 21.0 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, gift of Victor and [illegible] Hauge, s1997.129

time a chronology of some of the most important Persian ceramic traditions of the medieval period. The type of objects, ranging from luxury goods to simple utilitarian wares, facilitates a fuller understanding of the variety of shapes, techniques, and designs that lend the Persian ceramic tradition its unique character and identity.

Massumeh Farhad

NOTES

1. James W. Allan, *Islamic Ceramics* (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, University at Oxford, 1991), nos. 1–2.

2. Arthur Lane, *Early Islamic Ceramics* (London: Faber and Faber, n.d.), p. 13.

3. At least two other similar luster-painted bowls decorated with a harpy are known. See Eva Baer, *Sphinxes and Harpies in Medieval Islamic Art* (Jerusalem: Israel Oriental Society, 1965), plate 8, no. 14; and *Islamic Art: The Nasli M. Heermaneck Collection*, ed. Pratapaditya Pal (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1973), no. 30.

4. Oliver Watson, *Persian Lustre Ware* (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1985), p. 52.

5. Ibid., p. 67.

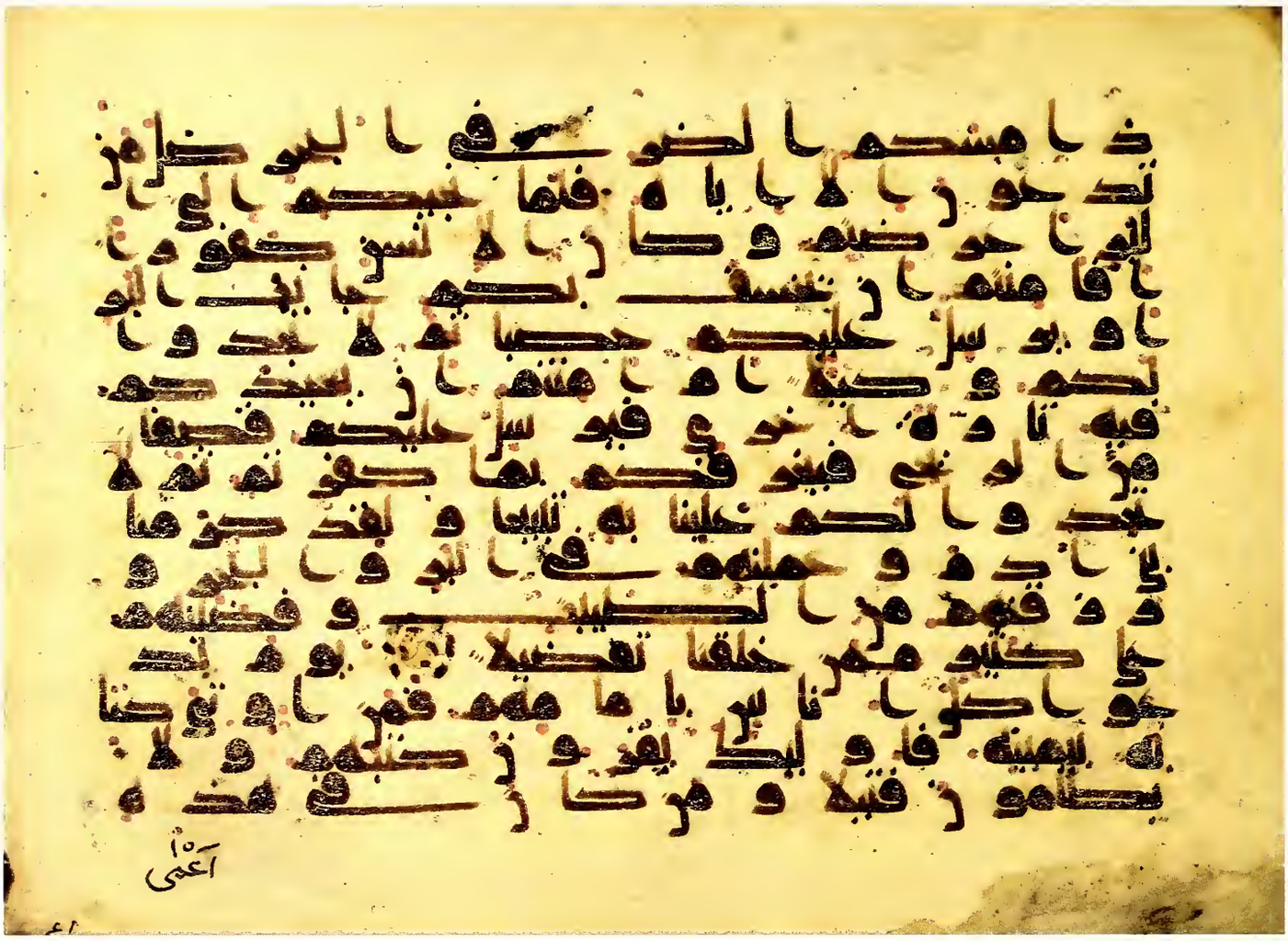
6. Stefano Carboni and Tomoko Masuya, *Persian Tiles* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993), p. 6.

7. Venetia Porter, *Islamic Tiles* (London: Museum Press, 1995), plates 19, 21, 27.

8. Allan, *Islamic Ceramics*, no. 19.

9. Ibid.

Calligraphy, Painting, Ceramics

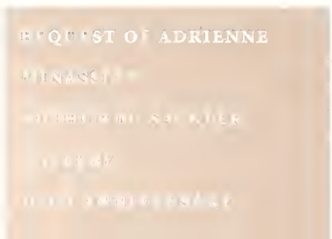


Iran, North Africa, 9th–17th centuries
Manuscripts: s1998.2–.18
Ceramics: s1997.55–.68

Among recent gifts to the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery is a group of some eighty works of art from the Islamic world given by the late Adrienne Minassian (1913–1994). A renowned collector and dealer in Islamic art, she was the daughter of Kirkor Minassian, another well-known dealer in the field.[1] The bequest includes drawings and paintings from sixteenth- to nineteenth-century Iran and India, an important group of Koran folios ranging in date from the ninth to the sixteenth century, and a number of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Persian ceramics. This diverse group represents a significant addition to the Sackler's holdings of arts from the Islamic world in a number of different ways. While the drawings and paintings complement the gallery's renowned collection of Persian and Indian arts of the book, the Koran folios, especially the early examples, fill a distinct lacuna and extend the chronological range of the collections. Prior to this gift, the early Islamic period — from about the ninth century until the Mongol conquest of circa 1250 — was represented by only two works.[2] The addition of the later Persian ceramics, another area otherwise unrepresented at the Sackler, considerably enriches the gallery's collection of portable objects and provides a foil for understanding and appreciating the works on paper.

The earliest works are several Koran folios, datable to the ninth and tenth centuries and the reign of the Abbasid dynasty (750–1258). As is evident from the illustrated example (no. 1), they are written in dark ink on rectangular parchment of varying sizes in the so-called kufic or early abbasid script.[3] Characterized by elongated horizontal strokes, short verticals, and red vowel marks, the regular, often generous spaces between letters and words heighten the script's visual impact. This angular script, reserved for the transcription of the Koran, was practiced throughout much of the Islamic world during the ninth and tenth centuries and exhibits notable variety in its scale and format. As only a few Korans with colophons have survived intact from this period, it is almost impossible to date these works accurately, identify specific

1 Folio from a Koran, sura 17:67–72, Near East or North Africa, 9th century, ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on parchment, 17.0 x 22.5 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, bequest of Adrienne Minassian, s1998.6



production centers, or determine regional styles and variations.[4]

During the tenth century, a number of different scripts associated with specific geographic regions of the Islamic world began to emerge. One such script generally known as eastern kufic flourished in the eastern Islamic lands, notably present-day Iraq and Iran.[5] The Minassian bequest includes a number of such Koran folios (no. 2). Dating from the early tenth to the late twelfth century, this calligraphic style tends to be more curvilinear and the letters more attenuated than the plain kufic script. With the more pronounced vertical thrust of the letters after the late tenth century, a preference for vertically formatted manuscripts also became evident. Moreover, the text was no longer written on parchment but on paper,[6] allowing for far greater flexibility in both the format and size of the codices.

The considerable range and variety of the Minassian early Koran folios, many of which are unpublished, allow the Sackler Gallery to illustrate for the first time the development of Koranic calligraphy from its early phase in the ninth century to its full maturation in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The bequest also includes several fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Koran folios from Mamluk Egypt as well as a number of later Indian ones.

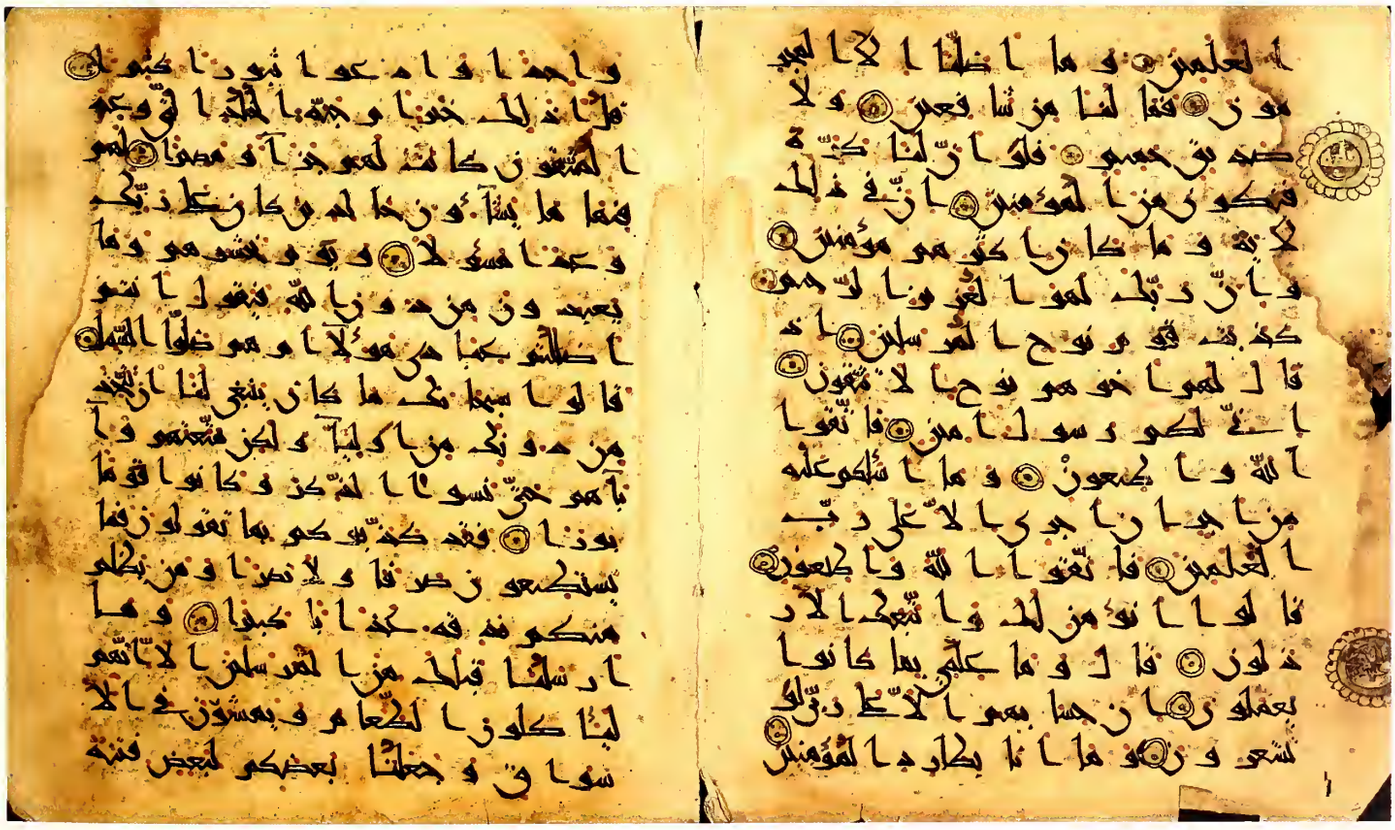
Among the highlights of the Minassian drawings and paintings is a little-known work by Muin Musavvir, a celebrated seventeenth-century Persian painter otherwise unrepresented in the Sackler Gallery's Vever collection.[7] Active from about 1635 until the 1690s, Muin contributed to several illustrated manuscripts but is particularly known for his elaborately inscribed, individual single-figure compositions. Ranging from quick, spontaneous sketches to more elaborately finished paintings, many images were probably inspired by the colorful inhabitants of Isfahan, the Safavid capital of Iran from 1592 until the fall of the dynasty in 1732.

A number of portraits, such as *Nashmi the Archer* (no. 3), are based on compositions by Muin's teacher and mentor, the celebrated artist, Riza Abbasi, whose prolific career spanned the years circa 1585 to 1635. Riza's original composition (fig. 1) — a penetrating portrait that verges on caricature — is considered one of the great masterpieces of seventeenth-century Safavid portraiture.[8] Dated 1630, it depicts an old archer *(kamangar)* in simple attire smoking a water pipe that is decorated with an enigmatic portrait of a Christian monk. Muin's version of *Nashmi the Archer*, typical of his stylistic approach to his subject matter, is more simplified and generalized, and he has altogether eliminated the portrait from the water pipe. Like many of Muin's works, Nashmi's portrait is also inscribed:

In the likeness of Nashmi, the archer, [it was] *created in the year 1039* [1629] *in the reign of Shah Safi, by my deceased master, Riza Abbasi. The lowly servant, Muin Musavvir, copied it on the date of* [. . .].[9]

The date of the painting has been erased, but the broad, somewhat hasty execution is typical of Muin's later works and suggests that it was probably completed in the 1670s. Instead of slavishly copying the work of his

2 Double folio from a Koran, suras 25:14–20, 26:98–114, Iran or Iraq, probably 11th century, ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper, each 18.9 x 15.8 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, bequest of Adrienne Minassian, S1998.10



teacher, Muin freely interpreted the composition, probably in tribute to his master rather than as a faithful portrayal of this unusual figure. As with most of Muin Musavvir's work, the "documentary" inscription here is almost as important as the image itself. It confirms the identity of the original portrait, expresses Muin's familiarity with Riza's work as well as his deep respect for him, and, most significant, affirms both visually and verbally his artistic genealogy *(silsa)* as the student of (and in all likelihood the successor to) the most celebrated and emulated of later Safavid painters.

Most of the ceramics in the Minassian bequest are of a distinct type, generally referred to as Kubachi after the name of a remote town in present-day Daghestan, in the Caucasus, where many such pieces were discovered in the late nineteenth century. Dating from the late fifteenth to the seventeenth century, Kubachi ware consists primarily of plates and dishes supposedly acquired from neighboring Iran in exchange for locally produced weapons.[10] A recent study of fifteenth-century ceramics from the Timurid period (ca. 1370–1506) supports an earlier suggestion that many of the vessels may have been produced in the northwestern city of Tabriz, which was quite close to Daghestan along the eastern shores of the Caspian Sea.[11]

Relatively consistent in their technical characteristics, the body of Kubachi ceramics is made from a soft, porous, and loose-grained stonepaste. The thin glaze that covers the body often crackles, allowing for dirt to seep into these minute cracks and discolor the underlying glaze. Typical pieces of this ware (no. 4) are decorated with blue-and-white Chinese-inspired designs that include peonies, ducks, and herons as well as abstract motifs such as the honeycomb pattern associated with Ming design of the late fifteenth century. Painted in a rather free and spontaneous manner, these motifs are repeated with minor variation on a large number of vessels, resulting in a distinct uniformity in both shape and design.

The other group of the so-called Kubachi ware (no. 5), is decorated in a polychrome palette that combines blue, red, yellow, and green colors, reminiscent of the rich hues of Iznik ceramics from sixteenth-century Ottoman Turkey. Embellished with figural compositions, stylized flowers, and abstract designs, the drawing on these wares tends to be even sketchier than on the blue-and-white group, giving them a visual boldness and immediacy.

Fig. 1. *Nashmi the Archer*, signed by Riza Abbasi, Iran, dated 1039/1630, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 19.0 x 10.0 cm. Courtesy of the Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, Bequest of the Estate of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, 1960.197

Both the technique and the design of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Persian ceramics found in Kubachi suggest that they were mass-produced. Inspired by more costly Chinese blue-and-white and perhaps Iznik wares, these porcelainlike vessels represented perhaps a more affordable, commercial type of ware, available to a wider segment of society.

The Minassian ceramic collection as a whole presents the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery with an important selection of later Persian wares that considerably expands the range and depth of the gallery's holdings, especially in the area of Chinese-inspired blue-and-white wares from Iran. Its addition allows a fuller and deeper understanding of the technical and decorative scope of later Persian ceramics as well as of the different levels of ceramic production that existed in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Iran.

Massumeh Farhad

PUBLISHED

Nashmi the Archer, Muin Musavvir, Iran, 1670s, in Sotheby's auction catalogue, July 11, 1966; and in Massumeh Farhad, "Arts of the Islamic World at the Sackler," *Oriental Art*, 43, no. 3 (1997): 42–47.

NOTES

1. The Freer Gallery of Art includes several objects and works on paper that were acquired from both Kirkor and Adrienne Minassian.

2. These are an unpublished ninth-century marble tombstone (s1993.8) and an eleventh-century Koran folio (s1996.84–.85). For the folio, see Glenn D. Lowry and Milo C. Beach, *An Annotated and Illustrated Checklist of the Vever Collection* (Washington, D.C., and Seattle: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and University of Washington Press, 1987), no. 2.

3. "Kufic" is derived from the name Kufa, a city in southern Iraq. François Déroche has recently argued that as no evidence links this script to Kufa, it would be more appropriate to call it early abbasid. See François Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition — Qurans of the 8th and 10th Centuries A.D.: The Nasser Khalili Collection of Islamic Art* (London: Azimuth Press, 1992), 1:11–16, 34.

4. An exception are the Korans found in the mosque at Sanaa in Yemen. See Hans Casper Graf von Bothmer, "Masterworks of Islamic Book Art: Koranic Calligraphy and Illumination in the Manuscripts Found in the Great Mosque in Sanaa," in *Yemen: 3000 Years of Art and Civilization in Arabian Felix* (Innsbruck: Pinguin-Verlag, 1987), pp. 178–87.

5. A recent term for the script is New Style. See Déroche, *Abbasid Tradition*, pp. 132–35.

6. It is believed that paper was introduced to the Islamic world by Chinese prisoners captured at the battle of Talas in western Central Asia in 751.

3 *Nashmi the Archer*, Muin Musavvir (active ca. 1635–90s), Iran, 1670s, opaque watercolor on paper, 17.6 x 8.9 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, bequest of Adrienne Minassian, s1998.15

7. The Freer Gallery of Art includes several drawings by the artist. See Esin Atil, *Brush of the Masters: Drawings from Iran and India* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1978), nos. 26, 34, 41.

8. Harvard University Art Museums, 1960.197. See Marianna Shreve Simpson, *Arab and Persian Painting* (Cambridge, Mass.: Fogg Art Museum, 1980), no. 32.

9. Translation by Massumeh Farhad.

10. Arthur Lane, *Later Islamic Pottery: Persia, Syria, Egypt, Turkey* (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), pp. 35–36, 78–81.

11. Lisa Golombek, Robert B. Mason, and Gauvin Bailey, *Tamerlane's Tableware* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers in association with the Royal Ontario Museum, 1996), pp. 136–37. The identification of Tabriz as a place of production for this ware had already been proposed by Lane in *Later Islamic Pottery*, p. 35.

4 Plate, probably northwestern Iran, 17th century, stonepaste painted in blue on white under clear glaze, diameter 22.0 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, bequest of Adrienne Minassian, S1997.63

5 Plate, probably northwestern Iran, 15th century, stonepaste painted in polychrome under clear glaze, diameter 28.0 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, bequest of Adrienne Minassian, S1997.56

Folios of Calligraphy

Iran, Iraq, India, Spain, 11th–17th centuries
Ink, color, and gold on paper
S1997.87–.107

The twenty-one folios of calligraphy given by Catherine and Ralph Benkaim are among the finest and most important works given to the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery on the occasion of its tenth anniversary. Ranging in date from the ninth to the seventeenth century, they typify every major calligraphic style that evolved from Spain and North Africa as far as India, many of which are otherwise unrepresented in the collection. All but three are folios from the Koran. This superb group presents a focused and succinct overview of Islamic calligraphy, considerably enriching the range of the Sackler's holdings as well as filling significant chronological and stylistic lacunae. The Benkaim gift allows the gallery to present a far richer and more comprehensive history of calligraphy from the Arab world, Turkey, Iran, and India than was previously possible.

Among the most impressive early works in the collection is a folio from a now widely dispersed multivolume Koran, datable to late-eleventh to late-twelfth-century Iran (no. 1).[1] Characterized by towering verticals and compact horizontals with sharp, sublinear diagonal strokes, this elegant script is loosely referred to as eastern kufic as it first flourished in the eastern Islamic lands, notably present-day Iran and Iraq.[2] Folios from this Koran, such as the Benkaim example (sura 5:51–52), are particularly notable for the design of curling tendrils and stylized blossoms that envelop the lines of text on each folio, creating a rich surface texture. This particular combination of writing and decoration appears in a number of other manuscripts, such as a thirty-volume Koran in the Shrine Library of Mashhad, dated to 1073–74, and another volume, previously in a private collection, completed in the year 1092.[3] Based on the Mashhad copy, Anthony Welch has attributed folios from the dispersed Koran to the late eleventh century and to northeastern Iran.[4] A third related manuscript, now in the Topkapi Palace Library (E.H. 42), was copied and illuminated in 1177–78 by a certain Abu Bakr ibn Abdallah al-Ghaznavi (his name implying that he was from the city of Ghazna in present-day Afghanistan) some hundred years after the Mashhad copy, confirming the persistent popularity of this particular calligraphic style and design. The Topkapi volume also lends support for a possible east Persian provenance for the Korans.

During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a variety of other, less "severe" eastern kufic scripts also evolved, as is evident from another detached folio from the Benkaim collection (S1997.95).[5] Less compact and with greater balance between the vertical and horizontal strokes, the text (sura 8:45–48) tends to be much more legible and "cursive" than the previous folio and soon replaced the more angular Koranic script.

By the late twelfth century, different geographic regions in the Islamic world developed their own particular style of calligraphy and illumination, such as the powerful maghribi or western kufic script of southern Spain and North Africa. As one of the most sophisticated cultural centers of the medieval Islamic world, southern Spain (Andalusia), especially Granada, the last bastion of Islamic rule in Spain, and North Africa witnessed the efflorescence of the distinct maghribi script. Derived from the more angular kufic or abbasid script, this script is notable for the even thickness of the strokes, varying from relatively thick to wispy thin ones, and its deep, open curves, often dipping well below the horizontal line. Vowel markers appear above and below the letters as short, horizontal strokes in red or gold circles. Written in dark brown ink on paper, the Spanish Koran folio from the Benkaim collection, datable to the late thirteenth century or early fourteenth century, is further embellished with thick, triangular knots in gold (no. 2). Inserted as verse markers, these knots enhance the boldness of the surface design as well as punctuate the script's stately fluidity. The large and elaborate tear-shaped medallion disguises the word *khamsa* (fifth), indicating another division in the text.

Many stylistic features of maghribi remained consistent throughout the centuries, and after the fall of Granada to the Spaniards in 1492, it continued to be used as the principal Koranic script in North Africa. Elsewhere variations of the cursive script, such as muhaqqaq, thuluth, or rayhani, became the preferred Koranic scripts and after the thirteenth century flourished in cities such as Baghdad, Tabriz, Cairo, and Delhi.

Another extant early Koran in a cursive script is a dispersed thirty-volume copy that has been attributed to a variety of different geographic regions, ranging from Anatolia, Iran, Central Asia, to India (no. 3).[6] Written in an unusually large script, referred to as "thuluth verging on muhaqqaq,"[7] each of the folios is inscribed with only three lines of text. The Benkaim folio (sura 5:64) is set on three sides within an intricate border consisting of a red kufic inscription against a fine gold arabesque scroll. Large medallions punctuate the outer corners of the borders, and interlinear Persian translations have been added in diagonal lines within the text area. As the incomplete seventeenth *juz* (section) from the same manuscript in the Freer Gallery of Art suggests, not all the folios are decorated.[8] Based on the similarity of the layout, format, and calligraphic style of this Koran to one in the John Rylands Library (760–773), Manchester, attributed to thirteenth-century Anatolia, David James has argued for an Anatolian provenance. He raises the possibility, however, that the borders may have been added later, perhaps in India.[9] Other scholars have proposed an Indian origin, probably Sultanate, for the Koran.[10] By examining another folio in the Pierpont Morgan Library, where some of the letters overlap the border decoration, Barbara Schmitz has suggested that the border may have actually been completed prior to the text and that the writing and decoration were done simultaneously as a "single unit."[11] This

1 Folio from a Koran, sura 5:51–52, Iran, late 11th–late 12th century, ink and gold on paper, 34.0 x 24.0 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, The Catherine and Ralph Benkaim Collection, S1997.97

2 Folio from a Koran, Spain or North Africa, 13th–14th centuries, ink, color, and gold on paper, 25.8 x 18.6 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, The Catherine and Ralph Benkaim Collection, S1997.105

The striking elegance of the nastaliq script, favored for copying poetry and other literary works, reached its apogee during the Safavid period (1501–1732), as is evident from the numerous independent calligraphies, gathered together with drawings and paintings in albums. An otherwise unknown calligrapher, Muhammad Masih presents a poem panegyric in tone that reads as follows:

Oh God, may your fortune remain awake,
May felicity always remember you;
May the flower of your good fortune be always in bloom,
May there be thorns in the eyes of your enemies.

The least Muhammad Masih-allah al-Husayni, 1026 [1617], *may he be forgiven.*[13]

These five works illustrate the range, quality, and importance of the Benkaim gift, which significantly enriches the Sackler collection, lending it considerable chronological range and depth.

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argument does not, however, take into consideration the undecorated folios such as the Freer *juz,* unless this is from a different Koran. Moreover, the Freer *juz* opens with an illuminated double folio, embellished with vegetal scrolls that bear little resemblance to the border decoration of the Benkaim folio in either design or color scheme and tend to be more characteristic of Koranic illumination from the western Islamic world. The Freer section is bound in a leather binding, stamped, and tooled with an interlaced star reminiscent of Syrian and Egyptian designs of the fourteenth and fifteenth century. Finally, the ink has faded in several places, lending support to Schmitz's argument that some of the tails of the letters may have been redrawn over the decoration at some later stage.[12] Although the exact date and provenance of this Koran wait further research, it remains one of the most fascinating and visually distinctive Korans. The Benkaim folio is the first decorated example from this enigmatic multivolume Koran in the Freer and Sackler collections.

The provenance of one (S1997.107) of two folios in the nastaliq script is more easily determined. Written on marbled paper, the poem is signed by a certain Muhammad Masih-allah al-Husayni and dated 1026/1617.

PUBLISHED

Folio of calligraphy signed by Muhammad Masih-allah al-Husayni, Iran, dated 1026/1617, in Catherine Glynn, *The Aesthetics of Calligraphy* (Los Angeles: University of Southern California, 1977), no. 40.

NOTES

1. For an extensive discussion of this Koran, see Beatrice Saint Laurent, "The Identification of a Magnificent Koran Manuscript," in *Les Manuscrits du Moyen-Orient: Essais de codicologie et de paléographie*, Actes du Colloque d'Istanbul (Istanbul, 26–29 mai 1986), ed. François Déroche, Varia Turcica 8 (Istanbul and Paris: l'Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes d'Istanbul and Bibliothèque Nationale, 1989), pp. 115–25. Saint Laurent argues for a late-twelfth- or early-thirteenth-century date for the manuscript.

2. The script has also been called Qarmathian, a derivation of eastern kufic. For a discussion of this term, see ibid., pp. 120–21. In a recent study, François Déroche refers to the eastern kufic script as New Style. See *The Abbasid Tradition—Qurans of the 8th and 10th Centuries A.D.: The Nasser Khalili Collection of Islamic Art* (London: Azimuth Press, 1992), pp. 132–35.

3. See Martin Lings, *The Quranic Art of Calligraphy and Illumination* (London: World of Islam Festival Trust, 1976), plates 11, 14–16, respectively.

4. Anthony Welch, *Calligraphy in the Arts of the Muslim World* (New York: Asia House Gallery, 1979), no. 13; Anthony Welch and Stuart Cary Welch, *Arts of the Islamic Book: The Collection of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan* (Ithaca, N.Y., and London: Cornell University Press, 1982), no. 11. Anthony Welch also points out the stylistic similarity of the script to that on ceramics made during the reign of the Samanids (819–1005) in eastern Iran and present-day Afghanistan.

5. For a related folio, see Lings, *Quranic Art of Calligraphy and Illumination*, plate 20.

6. For a recent summary of the arguments, see Barbara Schmitz, *Islamic and Indian Manuscripts and Paintings in the Pierpont Morgan Library* (New York: Pierpont Morgan Library, 1997), pp. 101–2.

7. David James, *Qur'ans of the Mamluks* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988), p. 173. In *Wonders of the Golden Age: Painting at the Court of the Great Mughals* (Zurich: Museum Rietberg, 1987), p. 26, B. N. Goswamy and Eberhard Fischer refer to the script as rayhani.

8. The Freer section (F40.16) has been attributed to thirteenth- or fourteenth-century Iran. Other undecorated folios are in the Chester Beatty Library and the Khalili collection.

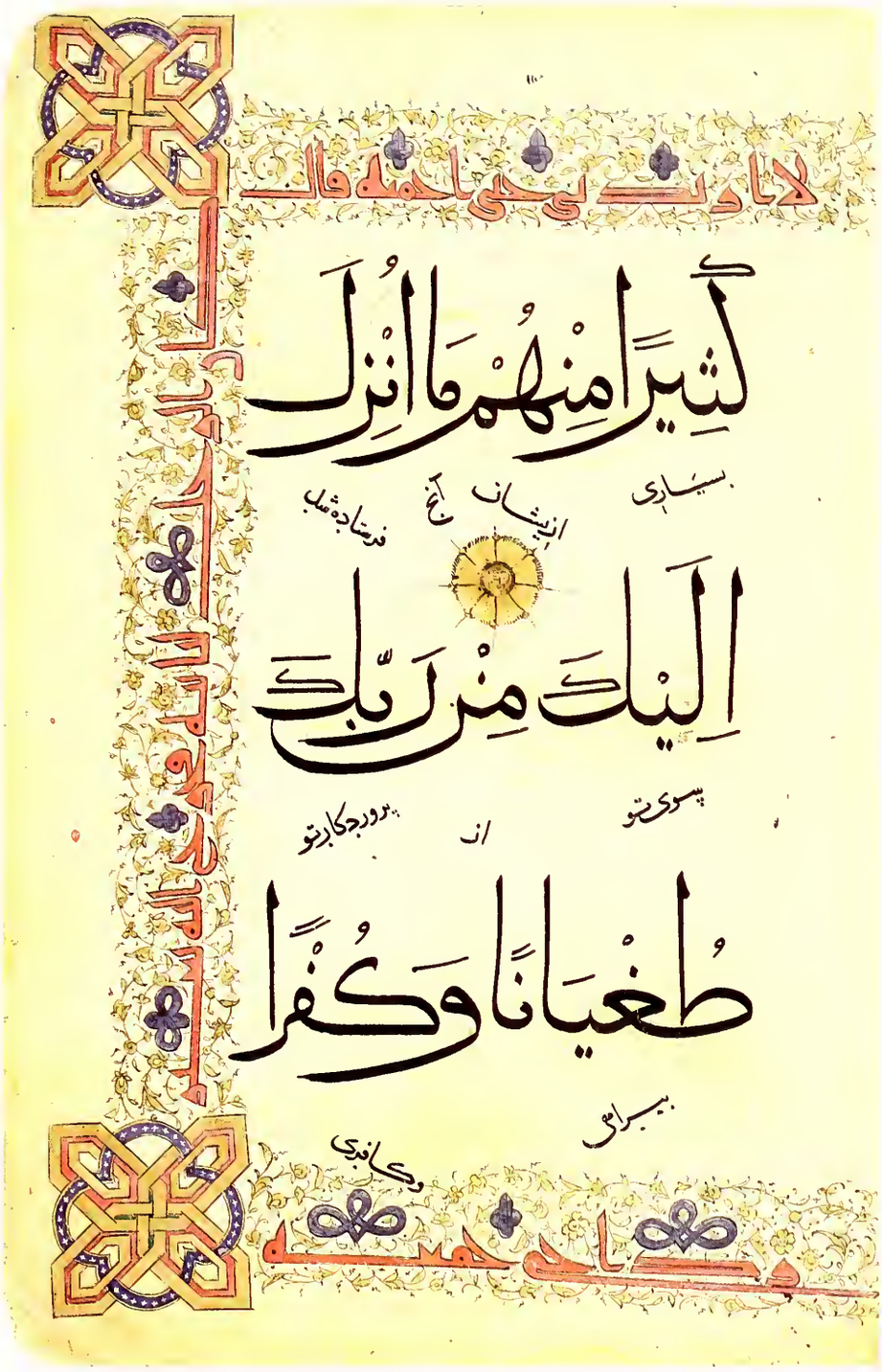
9. James, *Qur'ans of the Mamluks*, no. 59.

10. Goswamy and Fischer, *Wonders of the Golden Age*, p. 26.

11. Schmitz, *Islamic and Indian Manuscripts and Paintings*, p. 100.

12. Ibid.

13. Translation by Massumeh Farhad.



3 Folio from a Koran, sura 5:64, probably Anatolia or India, 14th century and later, ink, color, and gold on paper, 28.9 x 18.7 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, The Catherine and Ralph Benkaim Collection, S1997.102

Gulistan

Sa'di (died 1292)
Copied by Sultan Ali Mashhadi
Present-day Afghanistan, Herat, 1468–69
Margin illuminations attributed to
Aqa Mirak (active 1520s–40s)
Iran, Tabriz, early 16th century
Illustrations, India, ca. 1640
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
F1998.5.1–.105

This copy of the *Gulistan* (Rose garden), a collection of moralizing tales and aphorisms composed by the Persian poet Sa'di, is one of the most impressive manuscripts from Iran and India. Apart from its superb calligraphy, illustrations, and illumination, the volume serves as a fascinating historical document, highlighting the complex artistic and cultural relationship between the Mughals of India (reigned 1526–1858) and the Timurids (reigned ca. 1370–1502) and Safavids (reigned 1501–1732), who ruled neighboring Iran.

According to its colophon, the manuscript was copied in 1468 by Sultan Ali Mashhadi, the celebrated calligrapher, who was active at the Herat court of the last Timurid ruler and remarkable bibliophile Sultan Husayn Bayqara (reigned 1470–1506). Sometime during the early sixteenth century, the volume went from Herat to Tabriz, the new capital of Iran under the recently established Safavid dynasty. Abolala Soudavar, who has studied the manuscript in great depth,[1] has suggested it was at this time that the margins of the first sixteen folios were illuminated. The extraordinary designs include brightly colored flowers, bold arabesques, and exquisitely drawn animals in combat, a motif known as *girift-u gir*, literally "give and take."[2]

On stylistic grounds, Soudavar has attributed the *Gulistan* margins to Aqa Mirak and dated them to the mid-1540s. Aqa Mirak, one of Shah Tahmasb's most accomplished court painters, was also, according to the sixteenth-century artist Sadiqi Beg, unrivaled in the art of margin illumination. Aqa Mirak had contributed to two of the finest Persian manuscripts — the *Shahnama* (Book of kings), completed circa 1520–45, and the *Khamsa* (Quintet) by Nizami (1539–43).[3]

According to a notation on the flyleaf, by 1557–58 the volume was in the library of emperor Akbar, the third ruler of Mughal India (reigned 1556–1605). The acquisition of Timurid works of art, especially illustrated volumes, was a common practice among the Mughal rulers of India, who claimed descent from the Timurids and greatly admired and emulated their cultural and artistic achievements. Soudavar has suggested that this manuscript was intended as a gift from Shah Tahmasb to Akbar's father, Humayun (reigned 1530–40, 1555–56), an avid bibliophile, who spent the year 1544 in exile in Iran. As a sign of his deep respect, Tahmasb ordered Aqa Mirak to illuminate this copy of the *Gulistan*, which had the added distinction of having been copied during the last year of the reign of the Timurid ruler Abu Said (1451–69), Humayun's great-grandfather.

There may have been another reason for the addition of the illuminated margins. A large water stain appears in the lower half of the text area, suggesting that the manuscript must have suffered some damage after its completion in 1486. As a consequence, the folios were slightly trimmed, remargined, and probably also illuminated.

The manuscript was passed down from the library of the Mughal emperor Jahangir (reigned 1605–27) to that of his son Shah Jahan (reigned 1628–58), who in 1635–36 presented it to his "felicitous child," princess Jahanara Begum. When a fire broke out in the royal palace in 1644 and almost fatally burned the princess, the volume may have also been subject to some damage. The 1644 incident has been used to explain the manuscript's water stains and the six Mughal illustrations, attributable to circa 1645, that were painted over the Timurid originals.[4]

Although water stains have indeed discolored the top corners of the manuscript, these are not contiguous with those in the text area, indicating that the volume was damaged at two different times — once before the addition of the margins and once afterward. According to Soudavar, any damage suffered during the 1644 palace fire was probably minimal, as a small area of the original Timurid composition visible in *Prophet and Seven Disciples* appears in relatively good condition.

It is tempting to argue that the addition of the Mughal paintings was not so much a spontaneous response to a damaged Timurid illustrated volume but a conscious, calculated gesture to "improve" upon the Persian paintings as an affirmation of Mughal artistic and cultural equality, if not superiority, to their ancestors. By selecting his best court painters — Govardhan, Abid, Payag, Bālchand, Lalchand, and Morar — Shah Jahan stressed the importance of the *Gulistan* project. The same artists were also responsible for illustrations to the other remarkable manuscript of the period, the *Padshahnama* (Book of kings).[5] While the historical paintings are grand and formal and serve as pictorial interpretations of Mughal power and opulence, the *Gulistan* illustrations are intimate, personal, and contemplative, reflecting the poetic tenure of Sa'di's masterpiece. Different in mood and scale from most other works associated with Shah Jahan's reign and patronage, the *Gulistan* is testimony to the skill of Mughal artists in adapting their style to different themes and subject matter, ranging from the grandiose to the intimate.

Preliminary X-rays of the paintings have provided further insight into the relationship of the Mughal and Timurid compositions.[6] As Soudavar has remarked, the manuscript originally included five paintings; a sixth one, *Sa'di in the Rosegarden* by Govardhan, was added to the beginning of the text. The other five paintings follow the overall composition of the Timurid originals except for the position of the figures, their gestures, and setting. Interestingly, in every instance the size of the figures in the Mughal illustrations has been reduced, further enhancing the intimacy of scale and composition.[7]

While the specific reasons for these formal modifications await further research, the Mughal cycle of illustrations provides a different and expanded pictorial interpretation of the Timurid manuscript. By com-

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missioning the six illustrations, Shah Jahan left his distinct mark on this magnificent copy of Sa'di's masterpiece, affirming his role as the legitimate successor to the artistic and cultural legacy of his Timurid ancestors. For Shah Jahan (whose name literally means "King of the World" and who also adopted the title of "Second Lord of the [Auspicious Planetary] Conjunction" upon his accession in direct imitation of Timur's title)[8] the appropriation of such a manuscript lends further support to Mughal dynastic identity as the heir to Timurid cultural and artistic achievements.

The *Gulistan* is one of the most significant gifts in honor of the Freer Gallery of Art's seventy-fifth anniversary, complementing the renowned collections of Persian and Indian arts of the book. Embodying the highest Timurid, Safavid, and Mughal aesthetic standards, the volume stands as a milestone in the history of all three traditions. Its margin illuminations epitomize the intricacy and refinement of this decorative tradition under the Safavids, while the superb paintings provide a perfect foil for a fuller appreciation and understanding of painting under Shah Jahan. Finally, its complex history attests not only to the artistic and cultural links among the Timurid, Safavid, and Mughal empires but also to the role of the arts of the book in forging and maintaining personal and dynastic identities.

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1 Two folios with margin design, attributed to Aqa Mirak (active 1520s–40s), from a manuscript of the *Gulistan* by Sa'di, Iran, Tabriz, early 16th century, opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper, 24.5 x 16.0 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, gift of the Art and History Trust in honor of Ezzat-Malek Soudavar, F1998.5.6a–7b.

Sa'di in the Rose Garden, from a manuscript of the *Gulistan by Sa'di*, Govardhan, India, ca. 1645, opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper, dimensions without border 12.9 x 6.7 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, gift of The Art and History Trust in honor of Eleanor Malek Soudavar, F1998.5.6a.

PUBLISHED

Milo Cleveland Beach, *The Cambridge History of India, Mughal and Rajput Painting* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 138–39; Abolala Soudavar, with contributions by Milo Cleveland Beach, *Art of the Persian Courts* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1992), pp. 178–79, and no. 136a–f; Stuart Cary Welch, *India: Art and Culture, 1300–1900* (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1986), no. 158.

NOTES

1. I am deeply grateful to Abolala Soudavar for sharing a draft of his paper, "Between the Safavids and the Mughals: Art and Artists in Transition," presented at the British Museum on March 25, 1998, which includes many of his recent observations on the *Gulistan* mentioned here. These will be the subject of a forthcoming publication. See also Abolala Soudavar, with contributions by Milo Cleveland Beach, *Art of the Persian Courts* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1992), pp. 178–79, 332–38.

2. Martin B. Dickson and Stuart Cary Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 1: 264–65; and as quoted in Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, pp. 178–79.

3. Dickson and Welch, *Houghton Shahnameh*, 1:264–65; Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, pp. 178-79.

4. Stuart Cary Welch, *India: Art and Culture, 1300–1900* (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1986), no. 158; Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, p. 334.

5. For a recent study of this manuscript, see Milo Cleveland Beach and Ebba Koch, with a new translation by Wheeler Thackston, *King of the World: The Padshahnama—An Imperial Mughal Manuscript from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle* (London: Azimuth Publication Limited and the Smithsonian Institution, 1997).

6. A more detailed discussion of the manuscript and its production phases will be forthcoming from the author.

7. Partially because of humidity, the pigments of the Timurid illustration have darkened the paper and the outline of forms show through the back of the page.

8. Michael Brand, *Visions of Kings* (New York and London: Thames and Hudson, 1996), p. 106.

3 *A Prince Riding*, Bālchand, from a manuscript of the *Gulistan* by Sa'di, India, ca. 1645, opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper, dimensions without border 10.5 x 6.7 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, gift of the Art and History Trust in honor of Ezzat-Malek Soudavar, F1998.5.65a.

Feridun Strikes Zahak with the Ox-Headed Mace

Illustrated folio from the Tahmasb *Shahnama* (Book of kings)
Attributed to Sultan Muhammad (active ca. 1520s–1540s)
Iran, Tabriz, ca. 1525
Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper
Image 27.0 x 17.3, folio 47.0 x 31.8 cm
F1996.2 ab

Acknowledged as the grandest and most luxurious Persian manuscript ever produced, the *Shahnama* (Book of kings) of Shah Tahmasb (reigned 1524–76), the second ruler of the Safavid dynasty of Iran (1501–1732), was probably begun around 1522 under Shah Ismail (reigned 1501–24), Tahmasb's father and the founder of the dynasty, and completed sometime after 1540. In its original form, this illustrated volume of the Persian national epic, referred to as *Shahnama-i Shahi* (The royal book of kings) or *Shahnama-i Shah Tahmasbi* (Shah Tahmasb's book of kings),[1] included 258 large-scale illustrations, which mark the apogee of Persian aesthetic brilliance and refinement. As the literary symbol of Persian identity, the *Shahnama*, written in 1010 by the poet Firdawsi, has long served as an ideal vehicle for the expression of royal authority and legitimacy, and patronage of the epic became almost a royal duty.

The story of Feridun and Zahak occurs toward the beginning of Firdawsi's *Shahnama* and epitomizes one of the central themes of the epic — the battle between good and evil. Animosity between the two protagonists eventually leads to one of the fiercest and most prolonged feuds in the *Shahnama* — the battle between Iran and its neighbor Turan. According to Firdawsi, the evil king Zahak dreams that Feridun will one day strike him down with an ox-headed mace and put an end to his reign of darkness. Feridun, whose father had been killed by Zahak, wages various campaigns against the tyrant and even manages to seize Zahak's castle and enthrone himself. Discovering this, Zahak, enraged and wielding a scimitar, lowers himself through a window into the castle's interior to slay Feridun, who is holding court with some of his female companions. Before Zahak can complete his grisly task, Feridun, as foreseen, strikes him with his ox-headed mace. As Feridun is about to deliver a second and final blow, the angel Surush swoops down, proclaiming, "His time has not yet come," and tells Feridun to put Zahak in chains and take him to Mount Damavand to perish.

This painting has been attributed to Sultan Muhammad, considered the most influential of Shah Tahmasb's painters and one of the greatest of all Persian artists. According to one of his contemporaries, Sultan Muhammad's work "rises to heights, where the skies for all their starried eyes, have yet to see the like."[2] His finest paintings are marked by dynamic compositions and expressive use of line and color, characteristics associated with painting of western Iran under the Turkman dynasty (1378–1508). Coupled with a sense of elegance and compositional harmony that distinguish manuscript painting in the latter part of the fifteenth century in eastern Iran under the Timurids (ca. 1370–1506), Sultan Muhammad's style is among the most elegant yet powerful of the sixteenth century. In *Feridun Strikes Zahak with the Ox-Headed Mace,* spiraling arabesques, counterbalanced by the heavy, off-center throne, reverberate through the elegant stagelike space and underscore the dramatic moment — the blow of Feridun's mace and the arrival of the angel Surush. Her sinuous lines — from her graceful fingers to the fluttering ribbons of her dress — create one of the most potent accents of the entire manuscript.

Many of Sultan Muhammad's contributions to the Tahmasb *Shahnama* appear toward the beginning of the text, which is heavily illustrated. In fact, the Feridun and Zahak cycles include an unprecedented number of paintings — one on almost every folio.[3] It has been recently proposed that the pictorial emphasis on the Feridun and Zahak story as well as other episodes relating to the legendary feud between Iran and Turan may reflect the country's unstable political realities in the early sixteenth century, especially Iran's conflicts with its neighbors, the Ottomans to the west and the Uzbeks to the northeast. Commissioning such a lavish copy of the *Shahnama* — the first illustrated royal version in almost one hundred years — could be construed as a patriotic gesture intended to uphold the sovereignty and authority of the ruler.[4]

Feridun Strikes Zahak clearly plays a significant role within such an iconographic program. It represents the first of several images depicting the victory of good over evil and thus sets the tone for the rest of the manuscript in confirming the legitimacy of the rightful heir to the Persian throne. The prominent architectural inscription above the portico lends further support to the theme of royal justice and authority. Written as if addressing the hero Feridun, but also the viewer, it reads:

May you achieve whatsoever your heart desires,
May you remain forever in God's good care.[5]

Was *Feridun Strikes Zahak* perhaps meant as a verbal and epigraphic message to the young king, Shah Tahmasb, who had recently ascended the throne?

The Freer Gallery of Art's holdings of sixteenth-century Safavid painting include several extremely important illustrated manuscripts, such as a copy of the *Divan* (Collected works) by Hafiz, dated 1523 (F32.45), which represents its classical formulation, and the magnificent *Haft awrang* by Jami, completed between 1556 and 1565 (F46.12), the most celebrated example of the full maturation of this painting tradition. *Feridun Strikes Zahak,* one of the finest illustrations of the Tahmasb *Shahnama* and the first in the Freer collection, presents a crucial link between the two phases, epitomizing the power and refinement of Safavid pictorial tradition.

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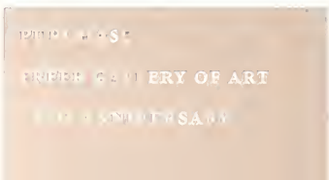
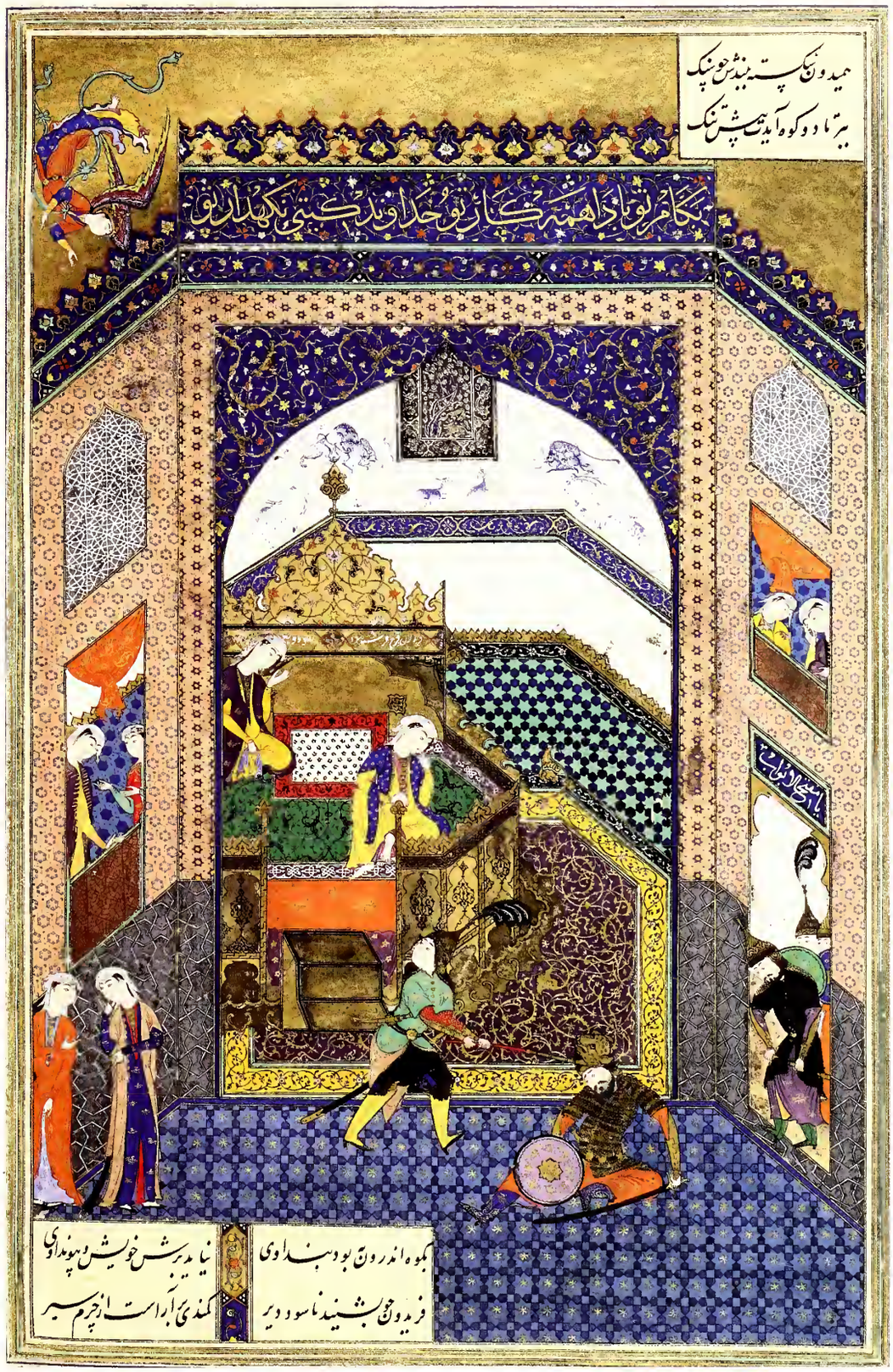
PUBLISHED

Stuart Cary Welch, *A King's Book of Kings: The Shah-nameh of Shah Tahmasp* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1972), pp. 112–15; Martin B. Dickson and Stuart Cary Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), vol. 1, fig. 94, and vol. 2, no. 23; Sotheby's auction catalogue, April 23, 1996, lot 11.





NOTES

1. See Chahryar Adle, "Autopsia, in absentia: Sur la date de l'introduction et de la construction de l'album de Bahram Mirza par Dust Muhammad en 951/1544," *Studia Iranica* 19, no. 1 (1990): 236–37. The manuscript is also referred to as the Houghton *Shahnama*, after a previous owner.

2. From Dust Muhammad's preface to Bahram Mirza's Album (Topkapi Palace Library, TKS 2154), quoted in Martin B. Dickson and Stuart Cary Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 1:51.

3. Robert Hillenbrand, "The Iconography of the Shahnama-yi Shahi," *Pembroke Papers* 4 (1996): 61.

4. Ibid., p. 59.

5. Translation by Massumeh Farhad.

Plaque

Iran, probably late 17th century
Pierced steel
14.0 x 38.5 cm
F1997.21

The reign of the Safavids (1501–1732) marks one of the most brilliant moments in the political and cultural history of Iran. With the unification of the country under one ruling house, Shah Ismail, the founder of the dynasty (reigned 1501–24), declared Shii Islam as the state religion. Considered the more heterodox branch of Islam, Shism — the belief that Imam Ali, the Prophet Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, was also his rightful heir — lent Safavid Iran a unique identity, distinct from its Sunni neighbors, the Ottomans to the west and the Uzbeks to the northeast. Under Safavid patronage, the arts of the book, textiles, rugs, ceramics, and metalwork flourished, while architecture reached new levels of refinement.

Among the outstanding objects from this period are a series of openwork steel plaques notable for their elegant, monumental inscriptions silhouetted against a delicate spiraling arabesque. Part of a larger epigraphic ensemble, these panels must have originally adorned the entrance to a tomb or commemorative structure, as is suggested by a number of related examples (cusped and oval in shape) that are inscribed with Koranic passages referring to paradise and the afterlife. At least two recently published plaques still have their backing, allowing reconstruction of part of the ensemble. Placed against a gilded copper plate, the plaques are framed by several steel pieces that are riveted to the plate, creating a larger rectangle. These larger panels would be placed on the support and held in place by narrow strips of metal nailed to the surface.[1]

A. S. Melikian-Chirvani has identified the inscriptions as the Shii invocation to the Fourteen Protected Ones (*chaharda masum*) — that is, the Prophet Muhammad, his daughter Fatima, and the Twelve Imams, direct descendants of the Prophet, whom the Shii believe to be his rightful heirs. The inscription on the present plaque, written in elegant thuluth script, refers to the attributes of the Twelfth Imam, also known as the Mahdi (Rightly Guided One), or the Hidden Imam, who will return on the day of Judgment. It reads, "And of him, [who is] of might and reason, and stands by the truth,"[2] and appears toward the end of the invocation. The full text occurs for the first time on a marble tombstone, dated A.H. 920/1514 in Ardestan, central Iran, and is repeated on various metal objects datable to the first half of the Safavid period.[3]

According to Melikian-Chirvani, there must have been at least two series of plaques, each one made of ten individual panels. One series, represented by four plaques in the Islamic Museum in Cairo, is characterized by inscriptions in the nastaliq script. The panels are reputed to have come from the sixteenth-century Darb-i Imam mausoleum in Isfahan. The other group, executed in the thuluth script and represented by a plaque in the Victoria and Albert Museum (M5.1919) and at least eight other plaques in various collections, "points to the hand of one of the great master calligraphers of the time." The author suggests that despite the difference in the choice of scripts, the nastaliq and the thuluth series are probably contemporaneous and from the same workshop.[4]

The present plaque indicates that there must have been a third series (or a second thuluth one), for its inscription is identical in content to that of another published thuluth plaque.[5] The two panels differ, however, in overall layout and design: the position of the letters appears to have been shifted; the spirals are of a slightly different dimension; and the shape of the leaves and blossoms varies. The existence of a third series is further confirmed by the steel plaque in the David collection mentioned earlier; this is inscribed with a phrase identical to the one in the Victoria and Albert Museum but has a slightly different design.

The dating of these steel plaques has ranged from the early sixteenth century to the late seventeenth century. Sir Charles Marling, who donated the Victoria and Albert Museum plaque in 1919, maintained that it was part of the grille around the royal tomb of the second Safavid ruler Shah Tahmasb (reigned 1524–76), in Shiraz. As Melikian-Chirvani points out, there is no record of Shah Tahmasb's burial site, and his predecessor, Shah Ismail, the founder of the dynasty, died in Ardebil. On the basis of the scroll design and blossoms, Melikian-Chirvani has argued that if these series of plaques are associated with a royal death, it is more likely to be that of Shah Ismail in 1524 than that of his son Shah Tahmasb in 1576.[6]

Although none of the rectangular plaques is dated, a cusped oval version in the British Museum (OA+368) includes the year 1105/1693. Also embellished with an elegant thuluth inscription (sura 27:30) against a spiraling arabesque, this vertically oriented panel is believed to have been commissioned by Shah Sulayman (reigned 1666–94).[7] Another closely related cusped panel, inscribed with sura 46:16, is signed "*katabahu* [written by] *Muhammad Riza*." It has been suggested that this name may refer to the celebrated Safavid calligrapher, Muhammad Reza Imami. Active in the latter part of the seventeenth century, he contributed several inscriptions to a number of important buildings in Isfahan, Qum, and Qazvin. Reportedly, a steel grille door, dated 1110/1698, was also signed by the same calligrapher.[8] In view of the dated British Museum example, which shares a distinct similarity in design, technique, and calligraphic style to the rectangular panels inscribed in the thuluth script, other scholars have argued for a later-seventeenth-century date for the entire series. The plaque, signed by Muhammad Reza [Imami], seems to lend further support to the later dating of these Safavid steel plaques, including the present one.

The Freer Gallery of Art owns three small Safavid openwork steel objects, but none of the scale and refinement of this seventy-fifth anniversary acquisition. This steel plaque complements the Freer's Islamic metalwork collection and expands its chronological scope.

Massumeh Farhad

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1. One is in the David collection, Copenhagen (25/1994). See the entry by Kjeld von Folsach, *Sultan, Shah, Great Mughal: The History and Culture of the Islamic World* (Copenhagen: National Museum, 1996), no. 265. The other was published in Christie's auction catalogue, London, April 23 and 25, 1996, lot 224.

2. This translation, by Massumeh Farhad, is slightly different from the one published by A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, "The Transition to the Safavid Period: The Evidence of Metalwork and Its Epigraphy," *Studia Iranica* 5 (1987): 193.

3. Ibid., pp. 190–91.

4. Ibid., pp. 191–92. For reproductions of the Cairo plaques, see Arthur Upham Pope, ed., *A Survey of Persian Art* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), vol. 7, plate 1389. For an example of a plaque with a thuluth inscription such as the Victoria and Albert Museum piece (M5.1919), see *Arts of Islam* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1976), no. 234.

5. Sotheby's auction catalogue, London, April 16, 1986, lot 182.

6. Melikian-Chirvani, "Transition to the Safavid Period," p. 192.

7. For reproduction, see *Arts of Islam,* no. 235. The tradition of Safavid metalwork continued until the fall of the dynasty as is evident from a very fine and monumetal astrolabe, made for Shah Sultan Husayn (reigned 1694–1722) in 1712, now in the British Museum. See Douglas Barrett, *Islamic Metalwork in the British Museum* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1949), no. 40.

8. See Christie's auction catalogue, London, April 23 and 25, 1996, lot 224. For a list of Muhammad Riza Imami's architectural inscriptions, see Mehdi Bayani, *Athar va ahval khushnivisan* (Tehran: Ilmi Publications, 1363/1985), 3–4:1178.

Untitled (1996)

Jananne al-Ani (born 1966)
Iraqi, working in Great Britain
Photographic prints
133 x 201 cm each
S1998.112.1–.2

Does one not dream of adventure and mysteries at the sight of these tall houses, these latticed windows, where one so often sees the sparkle of the inquiring eyes of young women?[1]

Nineteenth-century Near Eastern travel accounts coupled with images of sensuous women in languid poses, such as the celebrated odalisques of Delacroix, Ingres, and Matisse, created an imaginary vision of the "Orient" as a "world without change, a world of timeless, atemporal customs and rituals, untouched by the historical processes that were . . . drastically changing Western societies at the time."[2] Based less on the truth than what made "sense within the context of European needs,"[3] representations of women played a central role in reinforcing and perpetuating these reveries. Mysterious, enticing but also weak and submissive, women, much like the orient itself, became a "fantasy space or screen onto which strong desires . . . could be projected with impunity."[4]

This vision of the East, and especially of "the fetishised oriental women,"[5] also serve as a point of departure for Jananne al-Ani's evocative photographs, *Untitled* (1996). Born to an Iraqi father and an Irish mother, al-Ani, who now resides in England, became intrigued by Western representations of the orient as part of a long process of understanding her Arab heritage and culture.[6] Drawing on the formal conventions of nineteenth-century photography, especially studio portraits, al-Ani's works establish a discourse between the visual constructs of the past and those of the present, between the East and the West, and finally between the viewer and the subject. The meaning and significance of her photographs vascillate between these polarities, heightening their visual drama and intensity.

Untitled (1996), the winner of the prestigious John Kobel Photographic Portrait Award from the National Portrait Gallery, London, consists of two photographs. Generated from a black-and-white negative through an intermediary, large-format black-and-white internegative, they are printed on colored paper that lends a sepialike tonality characteristic of early photographs.

The two massive works are meant to face each other, thus challenging the traditional relationship between viewer and subject. No longer free to choose a comfortable vantage point for contemplating the work, the viewer is forced to stand between the two and look at one or the other at any given time. As if trapped by the gaze of the figures, the viewer is now transformed into the subject — a reversal of orientalist notions of subject and object.[7]

The five women — the artist herself, her mother, and three sisters — are seated according to age facing, or rather challenging, the camera. Much like nineteenth-century studio portraiture, they are isolated from their surroundings and portrayed with props representing "supposedly typical aspects of [their] culture."[8] In this instance, it is the veil, the most significant oriental prop, which has played such a decisive role in encouraging Western perceptions of Near Eastern women as mysterious, exotic, and seductive.[9]

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Al-Ani's powerful photographs deconstruct and unravel these mysteries — literally right before the viewer's eyes — by showing the figures in progressive stages of veiling (or unveiling), from the entirely concealed to the totally visible. Somber and motionless, the same women appear in both photographs but in reverse seating order and stages of veiling. Except for the central figure, whose guise is the same in both images, each of the other women is portrayed veiled in one and unveiled in the other.

By focusing on the veil as a means to obscure as well as reveal, al-Ani not only presents a fuller and more nuanced interpretation of its meaning and significance but also allows for a range of visual and psychological responses to this complex subject. As the five women gradually emerge from under their guise in one photograph and disappear behind it again in the other, their identities also transform from impersonal and anonymous to unique and individual in a continuous, uninterrupted cycle that dynamically portrays the perception of them both as individuals and in a group. Finally, the two photographs also address the nineteenth-century ahistorical vision of the orient in a fascinating way: while the timeless veil serves as the primary prop in the photographs, the women are also wearing denim jeans, shorts, and other contemporary trappings.

Al-Ani's *Untitled* is the first contemporary pair of photographs by a Near Eastern female artist at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery. Apart from their remarkable visual quality, the images challenge some of the central tenets of orientalism and misconceptions about the Islamic world. As part of a continuous effort to represent contemporary art from the Islamic world and the diaspora, al-Ani's mesmerizing photographs confirm the talent and creative power of a new generation of artists inspired and challenged by their rich artistic and cultural heritage.

Massumeh Farhad

PUBLISHED

Modern Narrative: The Domestic and the Social (London: ArtSway, 1996), p. 1; *The John Kobel Photographic Portrait Award, Catalogue* (London, 1996); *The John Kobel Photographic Portrait Award, Catalogue* (London: Zelda Cheatle Press, 1997).

NOTES

1. Gérard de Nerval, *Voyage en Orient,* as quoted in *The Orientalist: Delacroix to Matisse — European Painters in North Africa and the Near East,* ed. Mary Anne Stevens (London: Royal Academy of Art, 1984), p. 18.

2. Linda Nochlin, "The Imaginary Orient," *Art in America* (May 1983): 122.

3. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), p. 6.

4. Nochlin, "Imaginary Orient," p. 123.

5. Artist's statement, 1997.

6. Ibid. The reasons for al-Ani's interest in orientalism are similar to those expressed by Edward Said, who maintains that his work on the subject was also an attempt "to inventory the traces . . . of a culture whose domination has been so powerful a factor in the life of all Orientals." *Orientalism,* p. 25.

7. For a discussion of the relationship of between the viewer and his subject, see Norman Bryson, *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 87–133.

8. Sarah Graham-Brown, *Images of Women: The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East, 1860–1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 40, figs. 2–4.

9. Ibid., p. 134.

South Asia

Shiva Vinadhara: Holder of the Lute

India, Chola period, ca. 950
Bronze
Height 74.5 cm
F1997.28

He came
holding the vina,
the smile upon his lips
swept my heart away,
he did not turn back
to look at me,
he spoke
enchantingly,
he came to Valampuram —
there he abides.[1]

With these eloquent words, the seventh-century Tamil saint Appar sang of a similar image of Shiva, holder of a lutelike instrument known as the *vina*, once enshrined in a temple at Valampuram in coastal Tamil Nadu. In this elegantly swaying image, the bronze caster captured the essence of this form of Shiva, master of music, who is hailed as the very soul of sound, or *nada*.

Bronzes such as this were created initially in "prepared wax," a mixture of beeswax with dammar, or the resin of the *shal* tree, and generally worked with a wooden chisel, although a steel chisel was often used for detailing. The finished wax image, complete in every detail, was encased with three layers of finely ground clay and then fired. During the firing process, the wax melted and flowed out through funnel-like spouts that had been added in the clay. Molten metal was poured into the resulting hollow clay mold. Care was taken to ensure an even and complete distribution of the metal throughout the mold. Early Chola bronzes were created largely from copper to which tin and zinc had been added. Later bronzes were produced from an alloy known as *panchaloha*, or "five metals," which consisted basically of copper to which small quantities of silver, gold, brass, and zinc had been added.[2] The high copper content in this *Shiva Vinadhara* is evident in the deep honey hue of the image.

The art of casting temple bronzes, though initiated on a small scale during the eighth century, blossomed under the Chola rulers of south India (ca. 850–1287) to reach a rare stage of perfection. One reason for the escalation in bronze casting during this period was the major change in religious concepts and ritual that occurred in south India sometime during the tenth century. Until then, the deity of a temple, usually carved from stone and enshrined within the innermost sanctum, passively received the homage of the devout. Now artists began to visualize the deity more actively and depicted him or her in a variety of public roles, not unlike those of an earthly monarch. As such, the deity participated in many festivities of a mixed religious and royal character. These included daily rituals, such as giving audience to devotees or inspecting temple premises, weekly festivities, such as a swing ceremony (in which the deity is placed in a swing and pushed by the priest) or a procession to the beach, and the annual celebration of the deity's wedding anniversary. The stone sanctum image, being *achala* (immovable), could not be used for such activities; instead, metal images of the deities, termed *utsava murtis*, or festival images, were produced. These bronzes invariably had lugs or holes in the base through which poles could be threaded, enabling the image to be displayed or carried on a palanquin. Borne on the shoulders of priests and devotees, such metal images were a popular feature of festivities celebrated by the townsfolk.

Somewhat surprisingly, the tenth century, which witnessed the production of bronzes in large numbers, shows no signs of a hesitant start in a relatively new medium. Instead, some of the most perfect images, including this *Shiva Vinadhara* or *Devi as Queen Sembiyan Mahadevi* now in the Freer Gallery of Art (F29.84; fig. 1) belong to this period. The assurance exhibited by these bronzes seems to be explained by the fact that, during this first century of prolific bronze casting, the stone carver created the images in beeswax, and the art of stone sculpture had reached a level of high finesse and maturity. Later, with the increasing demand for bronze images, craft specialization occurred, and bronze working became a distinctive occupation.

It is only within a museum setting that the exquisite refinement of south Indian bronzes can be appreciated. In a temple environment, images exist solely as icons of worship; they are clothed in silks, draped with flower garlands, and adorned with rich jewelry so that the form beneath is totally concealed. Inscriptions confirm that this practice dates back to the tenth century. An inscription of circa 976 in an early Chola temple at Konerirajapuram, south of the capital of Tanjavur, describes the adoration of bronze images.[3] It speaks of priests who ritually bathed the images in milk, curds, butter, honey, and sugar; of temple servants who carried water from the holy Kaveri River to bathe them in perfumed water; of those who prepared sandal paste for anointing the bronzes; of the weaver who supplied cloth for draping the images; and of those who held a canopy over the bronzes as they were carried in procession. Since these practices continue to the present day, those who wish to admire the form of south Indian bronzes must seek them in museums.

In this bronze Shiva stands suave and relaxed, with two front hands poised to hold

Fig. 1. Devi as *Queen Sembiyan Mahadevi*, India, Chola period, ca. 998, bronze, height 102.4, width 31.1, depth 25.6 cm. Freer Gallery of Art — Purchase, F29.84

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the *vina* instrument and two rear hands holding the battle-ax and his faithful antelope companion, whose head has unfortunately been lost. Half hidden in the matted locks piled high on his head are the serpent and the crescent moon. The elegance of the image is equally pronounced from the rear, which affords a view of the splendid curve of the buttocks and the neatly arranged locks that splay out in fan shape across the nape of his neck. The smooth sinuousness of this bronze, combined with the confident and assured handling of the figure, suggests its creation around the year 950. It is a direct descendant of the *Shiva Tripurantaka* of circa 920, now in the Norton Simon Museum, whose body is excessively slender and almost attenuated with an exaggerated, even precarious stance.[4] It may perhaps be most directly related with *Shiva Tripurantaka* from the Konerirajapuram temple, whose worship is described in the inscription of 976.[5] In its slender form and the simplicity of detail, it is distinctly earlier than the glorious *Tiruvenkadu Shiva,* dated by inscription to the year 1011.[6] The worn details along the front of the image (the elaborately patterned fabric of the dhoti is visible only in the rear view) speak of its continued worship down the ages. Fortunately, its eyes have not been recut by temple authorities, as was done with many images, and the form retains its original aura. As a representative of the first splendid century of Chola bronze casting, this *Shiva Vinadhara* is a valuable addition to the select group of Chola bronzes in the Freer Gallery, and it complements, although on a smaller scale, the museum's famous Devi.

Vidya Dehejia

PUBLISHED

Masterpieces of Indian Art from American Collections (New York: Asia Society, 1960), no. 23; Shehbaz H. Safrani, "Samuel Eilenberg," in *American Collectors of Asian Art,* ed. Pratapaditya Pal (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1986), p. 147.

NOTES

1. Translation by Vidya Dehejia, *Art of the Imperial Cholas* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 115.

2. See C. Sivaramamurti, *South Indian Bronzes* (New Delhi: LaLit Kala Akademi, 1963), pp. 14–17, for details of casting.

3. Dehejia, *Imperial Cholas,* pp. 8–10.

4. Ibid., p. 34, fig. 26.

5. R. Nagaswamy, "South Indian Bronzes," in *The Great Tradition: Indian Bronze Masterpieces* (New Delhi: Brijbasi, 1988), p. 157, fig. 21.

6. Dehejia, *Imperial Cholas,* p. 67, fig. 50.

Head of the Buddha

Pakistan, province of Gandhara, 2d century
Schist with traces of gold leaf
Height 30 cm
F1998.299

Buddhism was founded in eastern India during the fifth century B.C. by Prince Siddhartha of the Shakya republic on the borders of Nepal. He abandoned worldly life, found enlightenment *(bodhi)* through meditation, and was hailed as the Buddha or Enlightened One. He established a simple path of ethical living, claiming to be no more than a mere human being who had found a path to salvation.

In the earliest art of Buddhism that has come down to us in the lasting medium of stone, artists avoided portraying the human figure of the Buddha. Instead, as we see in the first century B.C. stone reliefs at the stupas, or relic mounds, at Bharhut and Sanchi in central India, a symbol such as footprints, empty throne, or sheltering parasol was used to indicate his presence. It was believed that the Buddha had been born on earth 499 times previously; finally, in his five hundredth birth as chieftain Siddhartha, he achieved enlightenment and severed the cycle of rebirth. Never more would he be born on earth; never more would he take bodily form. While early Buddhists wished to portray the Buddha's inspiring life story in stone, they seem to have felt it improper to depict him confined within the bonds of the very body that he had managed to shed. They found it preferable to indicate his presence by a trace or symbol.

During the first century of the Christian era, the human image of the Buddha was introduced into art, and the earlier preference for symbolic depiction was abandoned in favor of embodiment. Part of the reason lay in changes within the Buddhist religion itself, which no longer visualized the Buddha merely as an inspired mortal who had found a path to salvation. The Buddha had now been deified, and his followers required a personal focus upon which to center their devotion. And what better object than the bodily form of the founder?

In order to understand the special "western" nature of the art of Gandhara, it is necessary to turn back to the campaigns of Alexander the Great who reached India in 327 B.C., only to be forced by his mutineeing army to abandon his plans for conquering the country. However, Alexander had founded several Greek outposts across Asia, and for centuries thereafter these continued to nuture Greek, and later Roman and Hellenistic, ideals. In the first century A.D., northern India was governed by monarchs of the Kushan dynasty, an astute people with an international outlook. Their vast empire extended from Varanasi on the Ganges River in India, through Pakistan, Afghanistan, Baluchistan, and Greek Bactria all the way to the river Oxus. Keenly aware of the pressures that could arise in an empire straddling so wide a range of ethnic and cultural boundaries, the Kushan monarchs took pains to accommodate their cosmopolitan population. Their coins featured Iranian, Greek, Hindu, and Buddhist deities, and their inscriptions were in Greek, Sanskrit, and Kharoshti, which was derived from Aramaic. When they turned to carving an image of the Buddha, they likewise accommodated different artistic strands. While indigenous Buddha images were produced in their eastern capital of Mathura in the plains of India, a unique Buddha image that used a Greco-Roman Apollo type as the model was fashioned in the province of Gandhara in present-day Pakistan.

This exquisitely modeled Gandharan head, with its classical youthful features and wavy hair, was once part of a standing or seated image that would have been clad in a monastic robe with heavy folds reminiscent of a Roman toga. Buddhist texts had formulated a set of thirty-two signs of the Buddha's superhuman perfection, several of which were merely synonymous with bodily beauty. This head incorporates two of the most important signs that set a Buddha image apart from any other. The *ushnisha*, or cranial bump on top of the head, standing for the Buddha's omniscience, has been tranformed by the artist into an elegant top knot, while the *urna*, originally a curl of hair resting between the eyebrows and symbolizing his renunciation, appears as a rounded dot between the eyebrows. The image, of over-life-sized proportions, must

Fig. 1. Detail, frieze depicting the Four Great Miracles — birth, enlightenment, first sermon, and great passing away, Pakistan, Gandhara, Kushan dynasty, ca. 2d–3d century, gray schist, height 67 cm. Freer Gallery of Art — Purchase, F49.9

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once have graced a major monastic center in the ancient province of Gandhara.

While dated Gandharan images of the Buddha are extremely rare, coins of the Kushan emperor Kanishka (reigned 78–101) that feature a toga-clad Buddha figure, together with the word "BODHO" in Greek letters, give us a clear date by which the typical Gandharan Buddha image had been introduced. Exemplifying the best of the Greco-Roman tradition, as expressed by artists working on the fringes of the Hellenistic world, this head is a superb example of an early image carved during the second century and still carrying traces of the gold leaf with which it was once covered. In fact, the brown coloring apparent on the head appears to be the "ground" that was applied to the stone so the gold leaf would adhere better. This refined, gently smiling Buddha head, the work of an artist of consummate skill, provides a handsome complement to the Freer Gallery's finely carved Gandharan frieze that features the four main events in the Buddha's life — birth, enlightenment, first sermon, and passing away (fig. 1).

Vidya Dehejia

Standing Buddha

India, Mathura, Gupta period, ca. 435
Red sandstone
Height 134.6 cm
F1994.17

The simple early Buddhist faith, referred to as Theravada, or "Doctrine of the Elders," evolved considerably over the years. With the deification of the Buddha and the introduction of a group of enlightened compassionate beings known as bodhisattvas (literally, "essence of enlightenment"), the faith was widely referred to as Mahayana (Greater Vehicle) Buddhism. The awesome dignity and stability of form, as well as the fluency of modeling of this Buddha image produced by evolving Buddhism, are characteristic of the sophisticated sculptural style developed in north India under the rule of the Gupta kings (310–510).

Gupta India enjoyed unparalleled creativity. Sanskrit poetry and drama reached great heights, with the poet Kalidasa writing his famous plays and lyrical poems and the writer Bana producing sophisticated prose. The Hindu religious literature of the Puranas, a series of partly historical and partly mythological texts that formed the basis for modern Hinduism, began to be compiled. Mathematics and astronomy reached a level of preeminence. Indians had a clear concept of abstraction and invented the zero, and astronomer Aryabhatta calculated the length of the solar year as 365 days. New heights were reached in the field of the plastic arts, with the building of the first Hindu temples in stone and the enviable achievements of Gupta sculptors.[1] A word of caution is wise, however, regarding the use of a dynastic appellation. While there is indeed a unity of idealized body form throughout Gupta India, there is little to suggest that such "ideal images" were the result of royal commissions.

Standing with one leg slightly bent, this commanding image of the Buddha is draped in a monastic robe that allows full appreciation of the contours of the body beneath. His left hand holds the folds of the robe, while the right was originally raised in the gesture of protection and reassurance known as *abhaya mudra*. The image was created in a workshop at Mathura, south of Delhi, a major artistic center that, during the rule of the preceding Kushan monarchs of Central Asian descent (first century B.C.–A.D. 242), had created the first truly Indian images of the Buddha at precisely the same time as artists in the northwestern region of Gandhara were creating Buddhas modeled on a Hellenistic prototype. Gupta artists of the Mathura workshop selected and combined elements from the earlier Kushan images of Gandhara and Mathura to create a quintessential Gupta Buddha image. From Gandhara, Gupta sculptors borrowed the idea of a monastic robe that covered both shoulders; from Kushan Mathura they borrowed the sensuous, full-bodied form of the Buddha. But the heavy classical folds of the Gandharan robe were now reduced to a looped network of strings beneath which the breath-filled body of the Buddha was visible. The sensitive handling of the stone permits the viewer to glimpse the ridge created by the draped saronglike undergarment wrapped around the waist; its lower edge peeps out at the ankles below the outer robe, or *sanghati*. Two male devotees kneeling at the Buddha's feet pay eternal homage to the Master. The head of the Buddha, missing here as in many Gupta Buddhas in American collections, would have completed this magnificent piece with downward-looking eyes, creating an effect of spiritual preoccupation and small curls covering the entire head including the cranial bump, the *ushnisha*, that was indicative of the Buddha's superhuman knowledge. Yet the image, exquisite in its rendering, conveys the power and majesty of the Gupta style. It would have formed the focal point as the main object of veneration within a Buddhist shrine.

The importance of Gupta images of the Buddha extended beyond the borders of the empire. Gupta India was the period of maritime expansion into Southeast Asia. Sailing out in search of fortune, Indian traders discovered towns and islands that they named Takkola (Market of Cardomom), Karpuradvipa (Island of Camphor), and Suvarnadvipa (Island of Gold), a name still applied to the Indonesian island of Java. Settling there, they married into the families of local chieftains and established themselves as the accepted elite class among peoples at a simpler level of civilization.[2] Sanskrit inscriptions of the period, found in ancient Champa (southern Vietnam), Funan (Cambodia), Borneo, Thailand, and Malaysia testify to the status that Indians achieved in the countries of their adoption. Gupta images served as the prototype for Buddhist imagery in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Java. Each region took the quintessential Gupta ideal and developed it further along its own lines, but the early images in each area reveal their clear indebtedness to the Gupta model. The Gupta Buddha was a source of inspiration for the entire Buddhist world, including landlocked Nepal and Tibet. Indeed, Chinese pilgrims to India, such as the famed Xuanzang (traveled 603–64), carried back to their homeland portable Gupta Buddhas of bronze.

While we may assume that a large number of Buddha images were produced in Gupta India, the surviving corpus is somewhat limited.[3] Museums at Mathura itself and in New Delhi possess complete images; repositories elsewhere are rarely so fortunate. Despite missing its head, this Gupta Buddha is a singularly important piece, whose addition to the Freer Gallery of Art collection enables visitors to the Buddhist galleries to bridge the gap between the Gandharan Buddhist friezes of the first and second century depicting the Buddha's life and subsequent Chinese and Japanese images of the Buddha.

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NOTES

1. See Romila Thapar, *A History of India* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1966), pp. 136–66.

2. G. Coedès, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1968), pp. 19–35.

3. Joanna Gottfried Williams, *The Art of Gupta India: Empire and Province* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982).

PURCHASE
FREER GALLERY OF ART
75TH ANNIVERSARY

Crowned Buddha

India, Bihar, Pala-Sena period, 11th century
Stone
Height 108.6 cm
F1998.24

This majestic Buddha, seated in crowned glory, was created at a time when the many monasteries and universities of eastern India, located within the realm of the Pala and Sena kings who ruled from the eighth to the twelfth century, were known across the Buddhist world for their art and learning. During this phase of great vitality, the monastic university at Nalanda, for instance, was so highly reputed that, according to Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang, many monks who wished to enhance their reputations "usurped" the name of Nalanda.[1] A second major center was Bodh Gaya, site of the Buddha's enlightenment, which witnessed great artistic activity under the Pala-Sena kings. This Buddha stela represents the final efflorescence of Buddhist art in India before the faith receded from the country of its origin to survive largely in the adjoining Himalayan regions.

Seated against a lightly incised throne, with one hand in his lap and the other extended to touch the lotus seat, the once-haloed Buddha image, adorned with a tall crown and heavy necklace, exudes an air of impassive serenity. His earth-touching gesture makes reference to the occasion immediately prior to his enlightenment when Prince Siddhartha called upon the earth to bear witness to his victory over Mara, the evil one of Buddhism. Prince Siddhartha, who lived sometime during the fifth century B.C., had founded the simple path of Buddhism after renouncing his princely status, abandoning palatial luxury, and exchanging his crown and regal garments for a simple patchwork robe. Ironically, the later Buddhism of eastern India, which added numerous male and female deities to the pantheon, returned to the Buddha the crown and the jewels he had renounced, visualizing them rather as part of his transfiguring radiance.

Two crowned Buddhas flank the central seated image, each holding the folds of his robe in one hand while extending the other in the *varada* gesture of granting a wish. It is likely that two more Buddha images, probably seated, would have been carved along the now-lost upper portion of the stela, which would have ended in an arched curve. During the ninth and tenth centuries, stelae from Bodh Gaya and Nalanda featured a central Buddha surrounded by miniature Buddha images that made reference to the eight great miracles in the life of the Buddha. With time, however, this eightfold grouping lost its importance, and several stelae began to carry repetitive flanking Buddhas whose precise significance remains uncertain. The avid interest once displayed in the historic life of Buddha was eclipsed, and emphasis shifted from the historical nature of Prince Siddhartha who had achieved Buddhahood to the image of Shakyamuni as a testimony to, and a manifestation of, the power of Buddhist practice.[2] The precision of the carving, the execution of details, and the wheel marks on the palms of the hand and soles of the feet are typical of eleventh-century work from the sites of Bodh Gaya and Nalanda, where such stelae would have been enshrined within monastic complexes. In many details, the image resembles the famous eleventh-century standing Buddha from Bodh Gaya, now in the British Museum, where it is known popularly as "The Black Prince."

The causes of the decline of Buddhism in India are many and complex and include a variety of internal factors. External factors, such as the Muslim destruction of monasteries and universities, also played an instrumental role. In his work *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, the Arab historian Minhaj al-Siraj describes how, toward the very end of the eleventh century, the Turkish general Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji destroyed what he thought to be a fortified city in Bihar. Only too late did his troops discover that this "fortress" was a place of learning, but by then none was left alive to apprise them of the contents of the many manuscripts recovered.[3] It is intriguing to note the correspondence between these events and the Buddha's own prophecy, reported in Buddhist scriptures, that the faith would die out one thousand five hundred years after him. Buddhists fled to neighboring, more welcoming areas that included Burma, Nepal, and Tibet. The seventeenth-century Tibetan historian Taranath confirms that monks entered Tibet in large numbers upon the Turkish destruction of the many monasteries of Magadha or Bihar.[4] Tibet's art was deeply influenced by the Pala style of eastern Indian sculpture and painting, as Tibetan tradition itself acknowledges.[5]

Pala images of the size, stature, and quality of this crowned Buddha are rare. The acquisition of this piece adds a significant dimension to the collection of the Freer Gallery of Art by documenting the final vibrant phase of Buddhist art in India.

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PUBLISHED

Vidya Dehejia, *Indian Art* (London: Phaidon Press, 1997), p. 100.

NOTES

1. Samuel Beal, *Si-Yu-Ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World,* vol. 2 (New Delhi: Oriental Reprint, 1969), p. 170.

2. As paraphrased from Janice Leoshko, "Scenes of the Buddha's Life in Pala-Period Art," *Silk Road and Archaeology* 3 (1993–94): 260.

3. Sir H. M. Elliot and John Dowson, *History of India as Told by Its Own Historians,* vol. 2 (London: Trubner, 1866–67), p. 306.

4. F. A. Schiefner, *Taranatha's Geschichte des Buddhismus in Indien* (St. Petersburg: Eggers et Co., 1869), p. 94.

5. Pratapaditya Pal, *Art of Tibet* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), p. 115.

PURCHASE — FRIENDS OF ASIAN ARTS IN HONOR OF THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FREER GALLERY OF ART

Seated Buddha

Central Tibet, 14th century
Gilt copper with pigment
Height 43 cm
S1997.28

The simple faith propagated by the Buddha, first supplanted by Mahayana Buddhism with its deified Buddha and a group of enlightened compassionate beings known as bodhisattvas, was to develop further in dramatic directions. Around the seventh century, a form of esoteric Buddhism introduced the concept of five (occasionally seven) celestial Buddhas who had never been born on earth, as well as an entire range of Buddhist deities, both male and female. Buddhism declined in India around the twelfth century partly because it no longer offered an effective alternative to the Hindu faith. The final blow was the destruction by Turkish cavalrymen of the many monasteries of the Pala-Sena kingdoms of eastern India, the last stronghold of Indian Buddhism.[1] Monks and Buddhist teachers migrated to the more welcoming adjoining territories of Burma, Nepal, and Tibet.

Buddhism had been introduced into snowbound, mountainous, landlocked Tibet as early as the seventh century by monarch Songsten Gampo (reigned 609–49), who unified the country. Tibet looked toward eastern India, Nepal, and Kashmir for spiritual and artistic inspiration and borrowed Kashmir's Sharada script, which developed into Tibetan. Adopting India's esoteric tantric Buddhism, Tibet added to it an entire range of new deities, foremost among them the ferocious deities who served a protective function. Monks and great teachers from eastern India, such as Padmasambhava (eighth century) and Atisha (982–1054), became luminaries in Tibet, where they were apotheosized and added to the Tibetan pantheon. However, the historic Buddha remained a pivotal figure.

Created to grace a Buddhist monastic altar in central Tibet, this Buddha is a singular reminder of the artistic achievements of early Tibetan artists. Sitting with one hand in his lap and the other extended to touch the now-missing lotus base, the Buddha exudes impassive serenity. His earth-touching gesture was a traditional symbol of his enlightenment. It makes reference to the occasion immediately prior to that momentous event when Mara, the evil one of Buddhism, issued a series of challenges to the Buddha, only to admit defeat, one by one. Mara's final challenge was to proclaim his own great acts of generosity (*dana*, or "giving"), to which Siddhartha countered that his acts of *dana*, which included giving away his wife and two children in his previous birth as prince Vessantara, were greater. Mara's armies were present to bear witness to Mara's deeds; who would vouch for Siddhartha? And the prince touched the earth with his fingers, whereupon goddess earth emerged from the ground to testify on his behalf. Siddhartha's enlightenment followed.

Tantric Buddhism's proposed system of five celestial Buddhas assigned one Buddha to each direction and one to the center. This system somewhat arbitrarily assigned the earth-touching gesture to Akshobhya, the Buddha of the Western Paradise. To ensure that devotees recognized this figure as the historic Buddha Gautama, the artist used a patchwork robe to recall the scraps of fabric sewn together that were the Buddha's only garment as he wandered the land, alms bowl in hand. Early Pali texts describe this garment as resembling the well-demarcated rice fields of Magadha, a state in eastern India.

Characteristic signs of the Buddha's superhuman perfection are delineated. His tightly curled hair covers the cranial bump, the *ushnisha*, which speaks of his transcendental wisdom. An *urna* dot marks the forehead, his ear lobes are elongated, and his neck is marked by three lines indicating beauty. The sensuous modeling of the torso and the sensitive treatment of the hands, especially the fingers, reveal an indebtedness to Pala sculptures from eastern India, a sinuous yet precise development of the earlier Gupta ideal, which the Tibetans themselves acknowledged as a major source of artistic and religious inspiration.[2] However, the broad face, the marked stylization of the hair with its application of blue-black paint, and the knoblike top of the *ushnisha* are local characteristics.

The image was gilded by a complex process, still in use today, that demands skill and precision. A mixture of gold and mercury is applied to the surface and heated over a smokeless fire until the mercury evaporates and the gold adheres to the copper image. The gilded surface is then polished with a smooth stone. Gold paint is often added to images, even those that have been gilded, while color is frequently added to the eyes, mouth, and hair.

Hollow casting, used for this Buddha, was the preferred technique in Tibet, as it enabled the insertion of relics and charms, which increased the potency of an image, before it was sealed with a thin metal plate. The figure would then have been attached to a hollow-cast lotus pedestal that would also have contained charms and prayers.

This impressive Buddha of considerable power and grace is an important addition to the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery collection, which has on long-term loan from the Sackler Foundation an exquisite though smaller Chinese gilt Vairocana Buddha (MLS 1790; tenth–eleventh century) that provides a fascinating comparative study of Buddhist imagery. Early Tibetan images of the Buddha, of any significant size, are rare indeed and are absent from the major Tibetan repositories in this country. This seated Buddha is of critical importance in building up a small but significant collection of Tibetan material at the Sackler Gallery.

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NOTES

1. Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204–1760* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 22–40.

2. Pratapaditya Pal, *Art of Tibet* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), p. 115. See also B. N. Goswamy and A. L. Dahmen-Dallapiccola, *An Early Document of Indian Art* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1976), p. 114.

PURCHASE — FRIENDS OF ASIAN ARTS IN HONOR OF THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY

Goddess Lhamo

Tibet, Densatil monastery, ca. 1431
Gilt copper, color, and semiprecious stones
Height 57.2, width 57.5, depth 14.5 cm
S1997.27

Romantically described as the "rooftop of the world," the Tibetan plateau, with India to its south and China to its north and east, is some 12,000 to 15,000 feet above sea level. It is a sparsely inhabited land of towering snowcapped peaks, and icy winters with wild electrical storms. When Buddhism was introduced into Tibet in the seventh century, the local nomadic yak herders were preoccupied with their natural environment, which they often personified as demons and spirits. Their shamanistic belief system, known as Bon, promised to tame fearsome natural forces through a series of magical practices. For centuries, Tibetans were uninterested, if not hostile, toward imported Buddhism, which could survive in this new environment only by adapting to local conditions. Tibetan Buddhism, popularly referred to as Lamaism, finally triumphed following an extended process of acculturation, adopting as one of its hallmarks a series of ferocious but protective deities who could overpower the numerous evil spirits feared by the Tibetans. These fierce deities became protectors of the Buddhist faith and of all Buddhist believers, and their visual portrayal in sculpture or painting is one of the most distinctive features of the art of Tibet.

Lhamo, the most powerful goddess of Tibetan Buddhism and the only female among the potent group of eight *dharmapalas*, or "protectors of the faith," is the protective deity of Tibet's capital city of Lhasa. Tibetan Buddhist priests known as *lamas* hold a position of unparalleled superiority. Tibetan history has revolved around a struggle for supremacy between various factions of *lamas*, most particularly today's dominant Gelukpa, or "Yellow Hat," sect founded in the fourteenth century and the Karmapa, or "Red Hat," sect, which lost prestige during the seventeenth century. The Dalai Lamas (from *Ta le*, or "ocean") belong to the Yellow Hat sect, and ever since Lhamo's propitiation by the second Dalai Lama in the late sixteenth century, and then by the fifth (1617–1679), reverentially known as the "Great Fifth," she has acquired immense prestige and remains today the patron deity of the current Dalai Lama.

This energetic sculpture captures the vivacity and ferocity of Lhamo who, according to a Gelukpa liturgical text, laughs thunderously as she sits astride her mount, the wild donkey, which has a distinctive third eye in its flank.[1] Her three eyes flash like lightning, her eyebrows blaze like fire, and she is clad in ornaments that include a garland of severed human heads strung by their hair, a crown adorned with five skulls topped with flaming jewels, and one lion and one snake earring. Lhamo is portrayed here in a rare manifestation as Remati *(gNod sbyin remati)*, in which she holds a treasure-spewing mongoose in one hand and a flaming crystal sword in the other which she brandishes over the heads of enemies. The sword has a scorpion handle that appears to have been a Tibetan symbol of both purification and protection; indeed, the sighting of a scorpion was believed to herald the imminent appearance of a protective deity.[2] Obviously the capacity to hold so dangerous a creature reinforced the powers attributed to Lhamo. Surrounding her are twenty attendant deities, mostly female, riding upon a variety of animal and bird mounts, brandishing swords and clubs, and holding human corpses as well as mongooses. Standing before her is one of her two female attendant deities *(dakini)* named Makaravaktra, who has the head of a mythical crocodilelike creature known as a *makara;* the other, not present here, is lion-headed Simhavaktra. The entire composition is framed by a luxuriant vine that seems to come alive with energy.

This gilt copper plaque was originally part of the decoration of the square base of a stupa at the Densatil monastery, a central Tibetan site of great spiritual power and intensity. As many as eighteen funerary mounds or stupas were built at the site, originally to inter the remains of highly revered Buddhist abbots — later without any funerary interments but merely to celebrate their memory. The earliest of the Densatil shrines was built in 1198; the last of the stupas dates to the early seventeenth century. All were plated with precious metals and decorated with plaques of imagery inlaid with semiprecious stones.[3] Stylistically, this Lhamo plaque appears to belong to the fifteenth century and to the same stylistic matrix as works from the temple at nearby Gyantse.[4] It cannot have adorned a stupa erected in 1434 to honor the celebrated abbot Sonam Gyaltshan, since that stupa was of silver. It may well have adorned one built in 1431, possibly with no funerary associations, that was acclaimed for its exceptional beauty.[5]

The curving vine motif that enclosed each image provided continuity from one plaque to the next, linking them visually along the drum of the stupa.

The Lhamo plaque was probably created by an Uray artist, a community that arose from intermarriage between the Nepalese and Tibetans. Urays were renowned for their skill in metal casting and were much in demand for major commissions.[6] The Tibetans frequently added gold paint to an already gilded surface to revalidate the sacrosanct status of an image, and they took great pleasure in encrusting their images with semiprecious stones. Both practices are in evidence here.

The Densatil monastery, with its many shrines and stupas, was completely destroyed by the Chinese, beginning in 1965. Since then fragments of metal imagery from the stupas have appeared in various parts of the world, while heaps of metal "debris" from Densatil are reported to exist in Beijing. Pieces with repetitive dancing images, part of the base moldings of the Densatil stupas, have been acquired by a few museums in the West; however, images of the deities are rarer. With the Dalai Lama's express blessings to save Tibetan heritage, the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery was provided with an unusual opportunity to acquire this exceptional high-relief plaque of a truly significant Tibetan Buddhist deity.

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PURCHASE — FRIENDS OF ASIAN ARTS IN HONOR OF THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY

NOTES

1. Rene De Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities* (The Hague: Mouton, 1956), pp. 24–37.

2. Amy Heller, "Notes on the Symbol of the Scorpion in Tibet," in *Les Habitants du Toit du Monde,* ed. Samten Karmay and Philippe Sagant (Nanterre: Société d'ethnologie, 1997), pp. 283–97.

3. Pietro Francesco Mele, *Tibet* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion Publications, 1969). Mele accompanied Guiseppe Tucci to Tibet in 1948, and his photographs depict the Densatil stupas with their plaques intact. Ulrich von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes* (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma Publications, 1981), p. 462, reproduces two of Mele's photographs.

4. Erberto F. Lo Bue, "The Sacred Enclave of Gyantse," in *On the Path to Void: Buddhist Art of the Tibetan Realm,* ed. Pratapaditya Pal (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1996), pp. 122–41.

5. I am indebted to John Eskanazi for information and assistance.

6. Pratapaditya Pal, *Art of Tibet* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), p. 52.

Four-mandala *Vajravali Thangka*

Central Tibet, Shakya monastery, ca. 1400
Opaque watercolor on cloth
85 x 74 cm
F1997.22

Perhaps the best-known objects of Tibetan art outside their country of origin are *thangkas,* conveniently portable vertical scrolls that were painted on fine cotton of Indo-Nepali manufacture and mounted with a surround of Chinese brocade. The cotton was treated with a mixture of kaolin and hide glue, and then stretched, dried, and polished on a wooden frame. After consultation with the patron, the artist outlined the sketch with charcoal, following set principles of composition and iconometry, and often used stencils to transfer designs onto the prepared cloth. Pigments were largely available locally. Blue and green were derived from mineral rocks near the capital of Lhasa; red and yellow came from ocher earths, though yellow was also derived from deposits of arsenic and from a Himalayan flower; black was the soot of pine wood; indigo and lac came from India; while powdered gold was obtained from Nepali merchants.[1] The opacity of the paintings depended upon the quantity of chalk added to the pigments, while the proportion of glue used as a binder determined their sparkle and luminosity.

Among the most distinctive visual forms associated with Tibetan Buddhism are mandalas, or meditation diagrams, created from the basic forms of the square and the circle, and painted with the four colors of red, blue, yellow, and white against a black background. Although mandalas are depicted two-dimensionally in paintings, they are intended to be visualized as three-dimensional palaces, with the center corresponding to the innermost shrine where the sovereign of the mandala resides. The Buddhist adept enters the square of the mandala-palace through one of four gateways flanked by arched entrances that are surmounted by representations of mythical aquatic creatures known as *makaras.* The adept then traverses the three outer circles, which are identified with the physical, verbal, and spiritual planes, and are envisioned as unfolding petals of the lotus. After experiencing knowledge of the deities that are located in these three circles, the adept finally reaches the center where resides the chosen deity of his or her meditative practice.

An inscription along the reverse of this remarkable four-mandala *thangka* tells us that it features the mandalas of the three families of Varahi, each with thirty-seven deities, and the mandala of Humkara with eleven deities.[2] The large number of short labels on the reverse of the *thangka,* arranged in starburst patterns, are repetitions of the consecration mantras OM AH HUM placed at the head, throat, and heart of each deity, and symbolizing the awakening of the body (head), speech (throat), and mind (heart). The inscription enables us to identify the central figure of three of the mandalas as red, blue, and yellow forms of the female deity Varahi, who may be the same as the well known Vajra-Varahi or Diamond Sow. Painted with a third eye on her forehead, Varahi dances on one leg upon the reclining form that may be that of Hindu god Bhairava. She wears a crown of skulls, with the central skull adorned with the wheel of dharma, or doctrine, resting in a crescent moon. She holds a skull bowl in one hand and a chopper with a *vajra,* or thunderbolt handle, in the other, while a tall staff threaded with severed human heads (*khatvanga*) rests against her shoulder. In each of the three mandalas, Varahi is surrounded by three concentric circles, and along the spokes or arms are painted thirty-six miniature figures of deities that compose her retinue, creating a family of thirty-seven deities. The doorways giving access to the three mandalas are guarded by animal or bird-headed protectors.

The fourth mandala is dissimilar in configuration and consists of nine large and two small lotuses, each containing a *yab-yum* (father-mother) image of a male deity in mystical union with his consort. The distinctive blue deity in the central lotus, stamping down upon two male figures, is the three-headed, six-armed tantric divinity Vajra-Humkara in mystical union with his consort. Humkara's two main arms, wrapped around his consort, hold the *ghanta* (bell) and *vajra* (thunderbolt) and are crossed in a gesture known as the *vajrahumkara;* his other hands hold the noose, skull cup, goad, and *khatvanga.* His consort, who wraps her two legs around his waist, is described as a *prajna,* or "wisdom," of his own creation. Like him, she is six-armed; two arms are wrapped around his neck and the other four carry the same objects as Humkara. The deities and consorts in the eight surrounding lotuses and in the two smaller configurations at top and bottom are all four-armed. They are painted in various colors, stamp down on male figures, and hold a skull cup, noose, *khatvanga,* and goad.

Eight cremation grounds dotted with trees and shrubs and traversed by streams are depicted outside the four mandalas. Each centers around a *mahasiddha* (great saint), seated on an animal or human mount, and is contained within a flame-tipped circle behind an altar. The surrounding figures are rendered with great imagination and vitality. Jackals consume human corpses, as vultures are poised to pick up the remnants. Spirited snakes, owls, and ghouls speak of the macabre. Much else goes on: *siddhas* are offered liquor, while some figures draw swords and shoot arrows, and others sing and dance. The black ground appears to be strewn with delicate white patterns that, on closer examination, turn out to be bones and skeletal remains. The top and bottom borders of the *thangka* contain a row of deities standing on lotus pedestals and enclosed within flame-tipped aureoles. Along the bottom are sixteen dancing *dakinis* with four arms and a third eye. Some play a musical instrument, and each holds an offering. In the top register, two dancing *dakinis* flank fourteen *yab-yum* images.

Several sets of *thangkas* with four mandalas are known; some eight individual paintings have been documented in publications,[3] and at least one more exists in a private collection.[4] They are based on an

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esoteric tantric text known as *Vajravali*, or "Diamond Garland," written in the eleventh century by the Indian Buddhist teacher Abhayakaragupta.[5] Four-mandala *thangkas* were commissioned by monks of the Tibetan Shakya Order, founded in 1073, whose teachings incorporated traditions brought from the monastery of Vikramashila in eastern India, with its famed Indian master Atisha. Tibetan Shakya monks were active in founding monasteries, and they commissioned the copying of texts and the creation of numerous works of art. When the Ngor monastery was established in 1429, its founder commissioned a complete series of *Vajravali* mandalas in addition to other *thangkas*.[6] Frequently the Shakyapa monastics are represented in the central space between the four mandalas of *Vajravali thangkas*; one actually features Abhaya, author of the "Diamond Garland" and his disciple Anupama.[7] The exact

identity of the two hierarchs at the center of this *thangka* remains uncertain.

An inscription along the lower edge of two four-mandala *thangkas* — "May the heart's intent of the holy glorious Lama Sasang Pakpo be fulfilled" — provides vital information that helps date one important *Vajravali* set. Scholars identified Sasang Pakpo with a Shakya monk, a renowned author of a book on poetics, who died in the 1380s, and suggested that the wording of the inscription implied that the *thangka* was created soon thereafter in his honor.[8] The more recent researches of David Jackson indicate that the Sasang Pakpo of the inscription is, in fact, the nephew of the monk who died in 1380; he is to be dated 1382–1456, thus moving forward the date of production of that series.[9]

Seven of the ten known four-mandala *thangkas*, including the Varahi *thangka* in the Freer Gallery of Art, feature Shakyapa monks at the center and cremation grounds around the mandalas. One of these, labeled as the seventh in the *Vajravali* series,[10] has a configuration of deities that appears identical to that of the Freer Gallery's *thangka,* whose inscription also labels it "the seventh mandala-scroll of the [Vajra-]vali."[11] Since both are labeled as number seven, and both may indeed be dedicated to Vajravarahi, two different *Vajravali* sets seem to be reflected in this group, perhaps separated in date by no more than ten years. One set appears to have had inscriptions in gold on the front of the *thangkas*, while the other set, represented by the Freer *thangka,* had an ink inscription and a plethora of painted mantras on their reverse. The three remaining four-mandala *thangkas* feature Buddhist deities at their centers. They, however, dispense with the cremation ground imagery and carry labels that identify them as the first, thirteenth, and fourteenth in the *Vajravali* series.

The sacred and artistic traditions of Tibet, as well as the style associated with the Tibetan Shakya monasteries, are very close to the painting tradition of the adjoining Himalayan kingdom of Nepal. With the constant presence of Newaris (those indigenous to the Kathmandu Valley) in Tibet, it is often difficult to be sure whether a work of art was created in Nepal itself or by Newaris living in Tibet. A biography of Ngor-chen (1382–1456), the founder of the Ngor monastery set up as a center of tantric teaching, states that he ordered artists from Nepal to delineate the complete mandalas of the *Vajravali.* Six Newar painters are said to have arrived at Ngor, without any prior arrangement, soon after the Ngor master decided to have a set of *Vajravali thangkas* painted.[12] Stylistic considerations apparent in this four-mandala *thangka* only confirm this statement. The fine precise workmanship, the exquisite scrollwork, the slender, undulating figures, and the spirited depiction suggest that while the painting was executed in Tibet for Tibetan abbots, the painters themselves were Newars.

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NOTES

1. See David P. Jackson and Janice A Jackson, *Tibetan Thangka Painting: Methods & Materials* (London: Serindia Publications, 1984).

2. I am deeply indebted to Matthew Kapstein of the University of Chicago who gave generously of his time to read and explain all the inscriptions on the reverse of this *thangka.* I must also acknowledge a debt of gratitude to David Jackson at the University of Hamburg for his guidance. He identifies the four mandalas of this *thangka* as numbers 26, 27, 28, and 22 in the extended 45-mandala presentation of the *Vajravali* series.

3. (i) Pratapaditya Pal, "The Kramrisch Bequest to the Philadelphia Museum of Art," *Orientations* (January 1995): 59, 63; (ii) Pratapaditya Pal, *Art of the Himalayas: Treasures from Nepal and Tibet* (New York: American Federation of Arts, 1991), cat. no. 84, pp. 150–52; (iii & iv) D. Patry Leidy and R. A. F. Thurman, *Mandala: The Architecture of Enlightenment* (New York: Asia Society Galleries, 1997), plates 21 and 22, pp. 86–88; (v) Marilyn M. Rhie and Robert A. F. Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion: The Sacred Art of Tibet* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), cat. no. 73, pp. 226–29; (vi) Gilles Beguin, *Art Esoterique de l'Himalaya: Catalogue de la donation Lionel Fournier* (Paris: Reunion des musées nationaux, 1990), cat. no. 32, pp. 70–72; (vii) G. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* (Rome: La dello Libreria Stato, 1949), plate 214; (viii) Pratapaditya Pal et al., *Tibet: Tradition and Change* (Albuquerque, N.M.: Albuquerque Museum, 1997), plate 74. A four-mandala *thangka* at the British Museum, (Gilles Beguin, *Dieux et demons de l'Himalaya* [Paris: Reunion des musées nationaux, 1977], cat. no. 103) and one in the Indian Museum Calcutta (S. Chakravarti, *A Catalogue of Tibetan Thankas in the Indian Museum* [Calcutta: Indian Museum, 1980], plate v) are of later date. One in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (E. F. Lo, Bue, *Sku-Thang: Tibetan Paintings from the Fifteenth to the Twentieth Century* [Florence: Mario Luca Giusti, 1983], no. 1), may also be of slightly later date. David Jackson notes that these various *thangkas* belong to some four or five different sets.

4. This one is unpublished, but the author viewed it in the Jagdish and Kamla Mittal collection in Hyderabad.

5. Raghu Vira and Lokesh Chandra, *Tibetan Mandalas (Vajravali and Tantra-samuccaya)* (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1995), especially pp. 9–13.

6. David Jackson, *A History of Tibetan Painting* (Vienna: Verlag der Osterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaffen, 1966), pp. 77–82.

7. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls,* p. 599.

8. Rhie and Thurman, *Wisdom and Compassion,* p. 227; Pal, *Art of the Himalayas,* p. 196.

9. Earlier scholars seem to have confounded Sa-bzang 'Phags-pa with his uncle Sa-bzang Ma-ti-pan-chen, who died in the 1380s. See David Jackson, "Apropos a Recent Tibetan Art Catalogue," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Sudasiens* 37 (1993): 109–30.

10. Pal, *Art of the Himalayas,* pp. 150–52, 196.

11. Read by Matthew Kapstein.

12. Jackson, *History of Tibetan Painting,* pp. 77–82.

Drawing of Seated Maitreya

Kuber Singh Shakya (ca. 1881–1957)
Nepal, Patan, ca. 1938–39
Black ink and red pigment on handmade Nepalese paper
365 x 199 cm
s1998.1

In the 1930s the king of Bhutan commissioned the Nepalese artist Kuber Singh Shakya to produce in copper repoussé a multipart, three-meter-high image of Maitreya, bodhisattva (enlightened being) and mortal Buddha to come. This drawing, rendered on a scale of 1:1, is the original cartoon for that work. Several sheets of handmade Nepalese paper were pasted together to accommodate the immense drawing. An iconometric grid was then snapped on with a mason's string coated with jeweler's rouge. The image was drawn over the grid using a homemade cat-hair brush and a mixture of lamp black and buffalo-skin glue.

Kuber Singh Shakya was a master metalsmith who specialized in the difficult art of repoussé, an intricate process by which malleable sheet metal is cold-hammered alternately on the back and front to create a relief design. As his surname "Shakya" reveals, Kuber Singh claimed descent from Shakyamuni Buddha, as do all Nepalis who bear this name. As a Newar, he belonged to the indigenous ethnic group of the Kathmandu Valley, long famous for skill in the arts. Although his name is now virtually unknown within or beyond Nepal, Kuber Singh was a prolific artist whose work was highly prized throughout parts of the Himalayas. His exceptional talent allows him to be compared with Aniko (also known as Anige, ca. 1245–1306), that famous Newar artist whose legendary skills propelled him around 1260 to the court of the Mongol ruler Kubilai Khan (1215–1294) and eventually to the khan's capital city (now Beijing) as head of all imperial workshops. The well-known Yuan Chinese bodhisattva made of dry lacquer now in the collection of the Freer Gallery of Art is widely believed to be from Aniko's hands.[1]

As for Kuber Singh, commissions for sculptures, Buddhist monuments (alternately known as *chaityas* or stupas), and other repoussé work came to him not only from Bhutan but also from Ladakh, Tibet, the Buddhist monasteries in the northern border regions of Nepal, and throughout the Kathmandu Valley. His works in the valley include remarkable repoussé sculptures, such as the three-meter-high seated Buddha in the Karmaraja monastery adjacent to Svayambhu stupa and three life-size images in the nearby Dharmachakra monastery. Even the well-known "mid-seventeenth century" portrait image of King Pratapa Malla (1641–1674) and family that crowns a pillar in the Kathmandu Darbar Square is in fact a replacement made by Kuber Singh in the 1940s. Kuber Singh's known lineage begins with Abhaya Raja Shakya, another Newar of renown who was active in the mid-sixteenth century. Abhaya Raja initiated the construction of a famous Nepalese monument, the Mahabauddha temple of Patan, which was conceived to replicate the temple at Bodh Gaya, India, where Shakyamuni Buddha achieved enlightenment.[2] The repoussé specialists of this lineage were appointed to the crown when Patan was an independent "kingdom" (1500–1768).

Several Nepalese manuscripts devoted to or containing iconographic drawings have become increasingly well known in recent years. The Los Angeles County Museum of Art has a number of them from the Robert Coles collection, while many other museums and collectors own one or two manuscripts or individual drawings.[3] None of these drawings, however, measures more than a few centimeters, and except for a single example in the collection of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, none correlates with any known work of art.[4] No known collection contains any Nepalese drawing that in size and importance could compare with this monumental Maitreya drawing, and none corresponds with an extant sculpture in situ in a royal chapel in Bhutan.

Several reasons account for the rarity of large-scale Nepalese drawings such as this Maitreya. Sculptors often made them only at the request of a client; otherwise, they simply worked freehand without the benefit of a preliminary drawing. Beyond their utilitarian role, such drawings had no value to the artisans or to anyone else, since they were not consecrated icons and certainly were not viewed as "art." Contributing to their rarity is the fact that none seems to have been purposely saved — a few simply escaped being destroyed. This cavalier approach, together with dirt, moisture, and the ravage of insects and rodents, also explains why so few drawings of this scale have survived and are so little known today. Many doubtless have been torn up to provide packaging for comestibles in the bazaar.

Kuber Singh Shakya seems to have been an indefatigable worker who made hundreds of repoussé sculptures — many of them monumental like the Maitreya — *chaityas*, and huge, nonportable prayer wheels as well as imagery, decorative details, complex temple pinnacles, and other architectural adjuncts. For how many of them he made drawings is not known, but whatever his output only five survive, and four of those are still with his descendants. Three drawings are of Padmasambhava and relate to commissions for various monasteries in far northwest Nepal, while one is an eleven-headed Avalokiteshvara, a model for identical images made for monasteries in Tibet and Nepal. The fifth, and largest one, is the Sackler's Maitreya. Considering artists' casual attitude toward these drawings, coupled with the legions of dealers and collectors who have swarmed through the Kathmandu Valley in the past decades, it is unlikely that similar works by other significant artists will be found in Nepal.

It may be noted that the little town of Patan in the Kathmandu Valley, where Kuber Singh's descendants — his son Rudra Raj, grandson Raj Kumar, and various other family members — still live and work, is one of the last bastions of repoussé work worldwide. Although it is still a living tradition

GIFT OF RUDRA RAJ SHAKYA AND FAMILY IN MEMORY OF HIS FATHER KUBER SINGH SHAKYA
ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY
10TH ANNIVERSARY

there, few worthwhile commissions are granted, and the number of capable workers in repoussé has dwindled to just the Kuber Singh Shakya family and three other families of this lineage. The difficulty of repoussé, coupled with other options now available for making a living, suggests the number of its craftsmen soon may dwindle to none.[5]

Because of its intrinsic beauty, rarity, value to the study of Himalayan art, and connection to a dying craft, Kuber Singh Shakya's Maitreya drawing represents a major addition to the holdings of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery. In an unprecedented gesture, the artist's descendants presented the drawing to the Sackler to preserve the work and to honor their ancestor.

Mary Shepherd Slusser

NOTES

1. On Aniko, see Anning Jing, "The Portraits of Khubilai Khan and Chabi by Anige (1245–1306), a Nepali artist at the Yuan Court," *Artibus Asiae* 54, nos. 1–2 (1994): 40–86; Anning Jing, "Anige, Himalayan Artist in Khubilai Khan's Court," *Asian Art and Culture* 9, no. 3 (Fall 1996): 31–34; and Mary S. Slusser, "The Art of East Asian Lacquer Sculpture," *Orientations* 27, no. 1 (January 1996): 24–29.

2. M. S. Slusser, "Bodhgaya and Nepal," in *Bodhgaya, Site of Enlightenment*, ed. J. Leoshko (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1988), pp. 126–42.

3. See Pratapaditya Pal, *Art of Nepal: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 145–81; M. L. B. Blom, *Depicted Deities: Painters' Model Books in Nepal* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1989); and John Lowry, "A Fifteenth-Century Sketchbook," in A. Macdonald and Y. Imaeda, *Essais sur l'art du Tibet* (Paris: Librarie d'Amèrique et d'Orient, 1977), pp. 83–118.

4. The Sackler drawings are on a manuscript folio that accompanied the pair of painted wooden manuscript covers for which they are the model (s1991.143.1–.4). The drawings and paintings are discussed in M. S. Slusser, "A Document on Himalayan Painting," *Artibus Asiae* 52, nos. 1–2 (1992): 119–30.

5. On this art as practiced in Nepal, see Ian Alsop, "Repoussé in Nepal," *Orientations* 17, no. 7 (July 1986): 14–27; and M. S. Slusser et al., "Metamorphosis: Sheet Metal to Sacred Image in Nepal," *Artibus Asiae*, in press.

Susanna at Her Bath Surprised by the Elders

An unidentified Portuguese artist
working in India
Image: 1595, oil on paper
Borders: Mughal, from a Jahangiri album,
opaque watercolor and gold on paper
Overall 42.3 x 26.4, painting 24.7 x 13.4 cm
F1996.9

The sudden and brilliant emergence of Mughal painting, largely within the reign of the emperor Akbar (reigned 1556–1605), is a remarkable phenomenon whose broad outlines are known but whose details continue to elude us. It was the result of an extraordinary coalescence of a variety of artistic traditions. The two most important were Persian, transmitted directly through the two Persian artists Mir Sayyid Ali and Abd as-Samad, who had worked for Shah Tahmasb (reigned 1524–76) before joining the Mughal court, and the pre-Mughal indigenous tradition practiced by "more than a hundred" Indian painters who were part of the imperial painting workshop.[1] But other stylistic factors contributed to the miracle that is Mughal painting, and not the least among these was the European tradition. Mughal artists copied European prints in their entirety and also imitated European one-point perspective, which was quite alien to both the Persian and Indian multiple perspectival presentation of the world. This folio, featuring a European-style oil painting mounted within watercolor borders and included in an album made for the fourth Mughal emperor of India, Jahangir (reigned 1605–27), is a striking demonstration of Mughal artistic experimentation and creativity.

From the days of emperor Akbar, illustrated Bibles and pictures of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the saints were available at the imperial court, arriving first as missionary tools and then as gifts from traders and important Europeans; Akbar ordered his painters to make copies of these.[2] European prints by Flemish painters influenced by the work of Albrecht Dürer and his contemporaries were apparently accessible to artists at Akbar's studio; an Old Testament print (1544) by George Pencz of Joseph telling his dream to his father seems to have been in India by the early 1560s, where it was copied by Mughal artists who totally transformed the background.[3]

More specific evidence of European paintings exists for the reign of Jahangir. The first English ambassador in India, Sir Thomas Roe, for instance, brought various gifts to the court of Jahangir and wrote back to England asking specifically for "Pictures of all sortes, if good." Roe also had pictures of his family and friends among his personal possessions, including a portrait by the great English miniature portraitist Isaac Oliver, and we know that Jahangir demanded to see them and then had them copied by his artists. A pavilion decorated with pictures of the Virgin Mary and other European figures that are presumably Mughal copies is featured in a painting of Nur Jahan hosting a banquet for her husband Jahangir and Prince Khurram, which is now in the collection of the Freer Gallery of Art (F07.258). Jahangir, in turn, presented Roe with his own portrait, which seems to have returned to England with the ambassador, where it apparently became the subject of an engraving.[4]

The oil on paper *Susanna at Her Bath Surprised by the Elders* is in a style more closely related to paintings from Portugal. It also seems to be by the same hand as *Madonna and Child with Angels* (Harvard University Art Museums, Fogg 1958.233). On stylistic grounds, it exhibits similar modeling, coloring, and effects of light on cloth;[5] in addition, both are oil paintings, a novelty in India, and they constitute the only two known oils from Mughal India. It is strongly suspected that the European painter of both could have been the artist known to have accompanied the third Jesuit embassy to the Mughal court in 1595.[6] A contemporaneous source reports of Jahangir, still Prince Salim at the time of this embassy, that, "As the Fathers had brought with them a Portuguese painter, the Prince straightaway ordered him to make a copy of the picture of Our Lady which they had brought from Goa."[7]

While not of remarkable quality by Western standards, *Susanna at Her Bath Surprised by the Elders* was sufficiently prized and admired, perhaps as an exotic curiosity, for Jahangir to have it mounted within splendid borders decorated in gold and included within an imperial album. More important, however, is the role that pictures such as these — closely studied, integrated, and transformed by Mughal artists — played in the evolution of royal Mughal painting.

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NOTES

1. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari,* trans. H. Blochmann (reprint, New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1977), p. 114, *ain* 34.

2. Pierre Du Jarric, *Akbar and the Jesuits,* trans. C. H. Payne (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1926), p. 26.

3. Milo C. Beach, "A European Source for Early Mughal Painting," *Oriental Art* 22, no. 2 (1976): 180–88.

4. Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to India: 1615 to 1619,* ed. William Foster (London: Hakluyt Society, 1899), pp. 214, 224, 488. See also Milo C. Beach, *The Imperial Image: Paintings for the Mughal Court* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1981), p. 39, no. 48.

5. Milo C. Beach, *The Grand Mogul: Imperial Painting in India, 1600–1660* (Williamstown, Mass.: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1978), pp. 51, 56, no. 9.

6. Sir Edward Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul* (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1932), p. 51.

7. Du Jarric, *Akbar and the Jesuits,* p. 67.

Allegorical figure

Attributed to Nar Singh (active 1580s–1604)
India, Mughal period, ca. 1600
Ink and color on paper
8.8 x 5.6 cm
F1995.13

In 1580, a Jesuit embassy from the Portuguese colony at Goa arrived at the Mughal court at the invitation of the emperor Akbar (reigned 1556–1605), who was eager to learn about Christianity. With the priests came European prints. A painting of the Virgin Mary that had come from Rome and was exhibited by the priests in their chapel seems to have pleased Akbar immensely. Father Francis Henriques, in a letter written from Fatehpur Sikri, relates that Akbar was so taken with the painting that he returned to the chapel with nobles, his chief painter, and other painters, all of whom were deeply impressed.[1] Intended as tools for religious teaching, these and other such images were instead collected by Akbar and his son Jahangir for their interesting and novel artistic qualities. Both emperors instructed their artists to study European works, and from these the best artists absorbed new techniques for achieving the increasing realism already demanded by their patrons.

This rendering of a female in Western clothing is adapted from an unidentified European allegorical figure. It may be attributed to artist Nar Singh on the basis of such signed works as a page from a manuscript of the *Tarikh-i-Alfi* (History of the millennium) in the Freer Gallery of Art (F1931.27). Nar Singh's career probably began about 1580, when he assisted master artists, but his first full pages were produced in the great series of imperial manuscripts painted around 1596 that include the *Khamsa* of Nizami and the *Khamsa* of Amir Khusraw Dihlavi in the collection of the British Library.[2] His specialty in portraiture seems to have been recognized, for he was assigned several individual portraits in an important *Akbarnama* (History of Akbar) manuscript of the late sixteenth to early seventeenth century, whose pages are divided between the British Library and the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin.

A page in the Freer Gallery of Art (fig. 1) from one of the albums assembled by Jahangir has a fascinating margin depicting five European women, attributable to Nar Singh, that indicate his interest in European images. All wear belted tunics, long skirts, and billowing capes, while their hairstyles and jewelry are clearly Western in inspiration. Although the figures seem to derive from Christian themes, it is difficult to determine their precise iconographical significance because, like the present allegorical portrait, they have been taken out of context. The kneeling woman at the top right holds a portrait on cloth of a Christlike figure, while the woman at the lower right appears to be presenting a book. It is the standing woman in the left margin, reading a bound volume, who bears the closest resemblance to our present allegorical figure.

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NOTES

1. John Correia-Afonso, ed., *Letters from the Mughal Court* (Bombay: Heras Institute of Indian Culture, 1980), p. 31.

2. See Milo Cleveland Beach, *The Imperial Image: Paintings for the Mughal Court* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1981), pp. 95–97, no. 10c, where other known works by Nar Singh are listed.

GIFT OF RUTH AND
SHERMAN LEE
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Royal Elephant Atash Khan

Attributed to Farrukh Beg (active 1586–1615)
India, Deccan, Bijapur, ca. 1600–1604
Ink, gold, and touches of color on paper
Overall 30.3 x 20.3 cm
F1997.16ab

For three centuries, from 1206 to 1525, the sultanate of Delhi, the term used to describe Turkish rule in India, controlled northern India under five different dynasties, although with fluctuating boundaries. The Deccan plateau of the south entered the Islamic realm when Muhammad bin Tughluq (reigned 1325–51) dreamed of capturing all of India, and for a few years he actually shifted his capital to the Deccan town of Devagiri, which he renamed Daulatabad. Independent Muslim rule of the Deccan commenced in 1347 when Bahman Shah, Deccani governor for the Tughluqs, declared his independence and founded the line of Bahmani sultans who, at the height of their power, ruled across peninsular India from the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal. In 1538, the governors of four important provinces of the Bahmani sultanate declared their independence and formed the five smaller Deccani sultanates of Bijapur, Ahmadnagar, Bidar, Berar, and Golconda. Paintings produced in the Deccani sultanates are among the least-studied areas of Indian art.

The Deccani style of art originated from two different artistic and cultural strands. One was developed by local craftsmen (the *dakhnis*, or Deccanis), while the second derived from the foreign Islamic population of the Deccan that included Turks, Persians, Arabs, and Africans (the *afaqis*, or newcomers). Skilled craftsmen arriving from the Persian Gulf in Arab ships that docked at the ports along the west coast of India contributed to the innovative aesthetic sense seen in the arts of the Deccan.

The Adil Shahi sultans of Bijapur (reigned 1489–1686), who seem to have been of Turkish origin, were responsible for some of the most spectacular Deccani paintings and architectural monuments. Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah II (reigned 1579–1627) was an extraordinary monarch and a mystic who studied Hinduism and titled himself *jagatguru* (world teacher). He was a connoisseur of music, poetry, and painting, and his court attracted poets, historians, architects, musicians, and Sufi mystics from across India and overseas. Sultan Ibrahim was himself a musician and writer. His remarkable book, *Kitab-i-Nauras* (Book of nine *rasas*), commences not with the traditional Islamic *basmallah* ("In the name of God") but with an invocation to Ganesha, Hindu god of beginnings. The text consists of songs in honor of Hazrat Gesu Daraz, a Sufi mystic of the Chisti order much favored by the Mughals, but it also includes commentaries on musical modes, or *ragas*, and songs in praise of Sarasvati, the Hindu goddess of learning and music, as well as the Hindu god Shiva and his consort Parvati. The *Nauras* is written not in the courtly language of Persian but in the local vernacular of Dakhni, which consists of northern Urdu, itself an amalgam of Persian with old Punjabi, to which were added loan words from local Telegu and Kannada.

Sultan Ibrahim, who built one of the most stunning of Deccani monuments — an extraordinary garden complex of tomb and mosque known as the Rauza[1] — also inspired an efflorescence of painting at Bijapur, which in turn resulted in works that have been aptly described as "South Indian visions of Iran."[2] He commissioned a number of extraordinary portraits of himself — out for a walk with his courtiers, holding castanets, hawking on horseback, playing a musical instrument known as a *tambura*, and riding upon his favorite elephant, Atash Khan, of whom he sings in his *Nauras*. Indeed, Atash Khan, heavily laden with gold jewelry, is the centerpiece of at least one other painting, where he is ridden by a mahout while a groom brings him a handful of hay. This finely delineated drawing portrays Atash Khan, covered with a gorgeous caparison and standing alone in a meadow, surrounded by nostalgically swaying Deccani-style trees. It has many of the visionary qualities seen in the two haunting paintings *Ibrahim Adil Shah Riding Atash Khan* and *Ibrahim Adil Shah Hawking*. In recent years, the discovery of a heretofore unnoticed inscription has revealed the artist of *Ibrahim Hawking* to be Farrukh Beg.[3]

The peregrinations of the Persian artist Farrukh Beg, who worked under three different patrons — the Mughal emperors Akbar and Jahangir as well as Sultan Ibrahim — provide a fascinating chapter in the history of Indian painting. Making his way from Kabul to the Mughal court in December 1585, this Safavid artist worked in Akbar's atelier until 1596, where he painted two pages for the *Akbarnama* (now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London), followed by pages for the Keir *Khamsa* of Nizami and a *Baburnama*.[4] During this ten-year period, Farrukh Beg painted largely in the Persian style but with a few distinctive Mughal touches. He then disappeared from the imperial center, only to reappear in 1609 at Jahangir's court. Recent research has conclusively proved that Farrukh Beg then moved to the Deccan court of Ibrahim Adil Shah II at Bijapur, where he produced some striking paintings for the sultan, including *Ibrahim Adil Shah Hawking* and *Ibrahim Adil Shah Riding Atash Khan*.[5] This fine Deccani drawing of the elephant Atash Khan may be attributed to the hand of Farrukh Beg and would date from circa 1600 to 1604.

On the reverse of the drawing is a page of fine calligraphy by the Safavid calligrapher Ali Riza Abbasi done for Mirza Muhammad Shafi (died 1608), who served as governor of the city of Qazvin in central Iran, the provinces of Khorasan in the northwest, and Gilan in the north. The poem reads:

I saw a great [ascetic] *in the mountains,*
Who had contended himself of the world with a cave.
"Why," I said, "don't you come into town,
To unburden your heart?"
He said, "There are exquisite beauties there.
When there is much mud, even elephants slip."

Written by Ali Riza al-Abbasi, may his sins be forgiven.[6]

Considered one of the great masters of the nastaliq script, Ali Riza Abbasi was appointed head of the royal library under Shah Abbas in 1598 and served him until the end of his reign in 1629. A calligraphic panel along the right side contains a Persian inscription with the information that it was "written in Farahabad, the abode of government." Farahabad, located in the northern province of Mazandaran, was the summer residence of Shah Abbas. The panel along the left side reads: "as a token of filial service [for] Mirza Muhammad Shafi', may God bless him."[7] The six lines of calligraphy in the central panel contain Persian poetry, with additional couplets spaced along the margins.[8]

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NOTES

1. Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture: Islamic Period* (Bombay: D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co., 1956), pp. 75–76.

2. Mark Zebrowski, *Deccani Painting* (London: Sotheby Publications, 1983), p. 10.

3. John Seyller, "Farrukh Beg in the Deccan," *Artibus Asiae* 55, nos. 3–4 (1995): 320.

4. Ibid., pp. 319–41.

5. *Ibrahim Adil Shah Hawking* is in Institute of the Peoples of Asia, Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, Russia, and *Ibrahim Adil Shah Riding Atash Khan* is in a private collection. See Zebrowski, *Deccani Painting*, plates 69 and 71, respectively.

6. Eskander Beg Monshi, *History of Shah Abbas the Great (Tarik-e 'Alamara-ye Abbasi)*, trans. Roger M. Savory, vol. 1 (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1987), pp. 1005–6.

7. Translated by Wheeler M. Thackston; the term "filial" here is meant as an expression of respect rather than a father-and-son relationship.

8. I am grateful to Massumeh Farhad for all the information contained in this paragraph.

Double folio from a copy of *Kitab-i hasha'ish* (The book of herbs)

India, probably Deccan, manuscript
dated 1595 or 1645
Opaque watercolor and ink on paper
40 x 51 cm
F1998.82

Among the earliest extant illustrated manuscripts from the Islamic world are Arabic translations of the Greek *De Materia Medica,* the herbal of Dioscorides. Written in the first century A.D., the text is divided into five books and includes the name, habitat, and pharmaceutical uses of some five hundred plants from Asia Minor. Although it was translated into Arabic in the late ninth century by Ishaq ibn Hunayn (died 910–11), most of the illustrated versions date from the thirteenth century, such as the celebrated dispersed copy, dated 1224, of which several folios are in the collections of the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery (fig. 1).[1]

The Persian translation of *De Materia Medica,* known as *Kitab-i hasha'ish* (The book of herbs), was completed by Ghiyas al-Din Muhammad Razvi for the Safavid ruler of Iran, Shah Abbas (reigned 1588–1629). According to Barbara Schmitz, it was based on another early copy, dated 1152–76, that belonged to Shah Abbas and is now in the library of the Imam Riza Shrine in Mashhad, Iran. Although the original royal translation is reportedly lost, one manuscript, dated 1645 with Shah Abbas's preface, is in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (Pers. ms. 273), and a second one is in collection of the Topkapi Library, Istanbul (Ahmet III, 2147).[2]

The present double folio, depicting two different types of mallow and a variety of herbs to aid digestion, is from another Persian translation of Dioscorides' herbal. The manuscript, reportedly dated 1595, has been attributed to India, more specifically to Bijapur in the Deccan and the reign of the Ibrahim Adil Shah II (1580–1627), one of the most brilliant and learned patrons of the arts,[3] written in a somewhat hasty nastaliq script. The spontaneous style of the illustrations differs considerably from the

Fig. 1. *Physician and Attendant with Heliotrop,* from *De Materia Medica* by Dioscorides, Iraq, dated 1224, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, overall 13.0 x 9.8 cm. Freer Gallery of Art — Purchase, F38.1

more finished and meticulously executed compositions attributed to Ibrahim Adil Shah's patronage.[4] In fact, David James, who has studied the manuscript at length, has argued that the date should be read as 1645 rather than 1595.[5]

Although the Deccani folio conforms to the general format and layout of Arabic illustrated herbals established several centuries earlier, it is almost identical to Safavid prototypes in its style, format, and execution.[6] In the Arabic manuscripts, each illustration of a plant, whether shown by itself or as part of a narrative scene, is neatly inserted within the text (see fig. 1), while in the Deccani (and Safavid) versions, several illustrations appear almost randomly on the page. Crowding each other and spilling into the margins, these stylized botanical forms are notable for their expressive and lively treatment, found in few other illustrated herbals. Interestingly, the relation of the text and images indicates that the paintings may have been done prior to the descriptions and commentary, a reversal of the traditional sequence in manuscript production.[7]

While further research is needed on this fascinating copy of the *Kitab-i-hasha'ish,* it confirms a sudden interest in classical Arabic texts in the Deccan from the second half of the sixteenth century. In 1572, Kamal al-Din Husayn, a commander of the Adil Shahis, commissioned one, if not two, copies of the *Ajaib al-makhluqat* (Wonders of creation), an encyclopedic work on heavenly and terrestrial bodies by al-Qazwini, now in the India Office Library, London.[8] Apart from their practical uses and applications, the ownership of these traditional texts may have served as signs of prestige within the socially, politically, and historically complex world of the Deccan.

This unusual double folio represents an important addition to the collection of Deccani works at the Freer Gallery of Art. It illustrates the continuous transmission and reinterpretation of certain classical texts, such as *De Materia Medica,* for new audiences, strengthening the shared visual and verbal culture of the Islamic world. In view of the Freer's 1224 *De Materia Medica* illustrations as well as a highly important fragmentary copy of the *Ajaib al-makhluqat,*[9] the double folio serves as an invaluable foil for understanding and appreciating the tradition of illustrated scientific texts in the Islamic world.

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NOTES

1. Most of this manuscript is in the Sulaymaniyya mosque library, Istanbul, Aya Sofia no. 3703; for folios in the Freer collection, see Esin Atil, *Art of the Arab World* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1975), nos. 19–25; for folios in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, see Glenn D. Lowry with Susan Nemazee, *A Jeweler's Eye: Islamic Arts of the Book from the Vever Collection* (Seattle and Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in association with the University of Washington Press, 1988), cat. nos. 4–5.

2. Barbara Schmitz, *Islamic Manuscripts in the New York Public Library* (New York and Oxford: New York Public Library and Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 14; Stefano Carboni, "The Arabic Manuscripts," in *Pages of Perfection: Islamic Paintings and Calligraphy from the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg*, ed. Yuri Pretrosyan (Lugano: ARCH Foundation, 1995), pp. 89–90, figs. 16 and 17.

3. Terence McInerney, *Indian Painting, 1525–1825*, exhibition catalogue (London: David Carritt, 1982), pp. 47–48. For another illustration attributed to this patron, see *Royal Elephant Atash Khan*, F1997.16a.

4. Andrew Topsfield and Milo C. Beach, *Indian Paintings from the Collection of Howard Hodgkin* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), p. 32.

5. As quoted in Schmitz, *Islamic Manuscripts*, p. 15 n. 5. The hegira date for 1595 is 1004, and for 1645, it is 1054. The Arabic numerals 0 and 5 are very similar and can be easily mistaken.

6. Reproduced in Carboni, "Arabic Manuscripts," fig. 17 (Chester Beatty Dublin, CPB 273) and cat. 49 (Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, D-143). The dates of these two manuscripts, 1645 and 1658 respectively, lend further support to a later date for the Deccani *Kitab-i hashai'ish* in question. Carboni has also proposed that the Leningrad manuscript may be from the Deccan rather than Safavid Iran. See ibid., pp. 90–91.

7. Another folio from this manuscript, now in the collection of Howard Hodgkin, depicts bamboos with no text at all. See Topsfield and Beach, *Indian Paintings from the Collection of Howard Hodgkin*, pp. 32, 33.

8. These two manuscripts, Loth 723 and 724, are discussed in Stefano Carboni, "Constellations, Giants, and Angels from al-Qazwini's Manuscripts," in *Islamic Art in the Ashmolean*, ed. James Allan, vol. 10, part 1 of Oxford Studies in Islamic Art 10, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 83–99.

9. See Atil, *Art of the Arab World*, cat. nos. 55–70; Julie Badie, "The Sarre Qazwini: An Early Aq-Qoyunlu Manuscript?" *Ars Orientalis* 14 (1984): 98–113.

Portrait of Saru Taqi

Bishandas (active 1596–1620)
Probably Iran, ca. 1613–19
Opaque watercolor and gold on paper
Image 15.4 x 8.0 cm
F1997.30

This delicately executed portrait of a Safavid courtier is the work of Bishandas, a major artist at the court of Mughal emperor Jahangir (reigned 1605–27), and was possibly painted by him when he visited the Persian court of Shah Abbas (reigned 1588–1629) at Isfahan. It provides arresting testimony of Mughal-Safavid diplomatic dialogue in the midst of the intense rivalry and tension — political, religious, military, and economic — that existed between the two courts, in particular over the strategic fortress of Qandahar in Afghanistan, which both sides desired to control. At the start of Jahangir's reign, Qandahar was in Mughal hands, and a Persian attempt to storm it in 1606 was unsuccessful. Five years later, in 1611, the first Persian ambassadorial mission arrived in India with a letter extending Shah Abbas's friendship to the Mughal emperor; three more such missions to the Mughal court followed in 1615, 1616, and 1620. In turn, Jahangir sent an embassy to Shah Abbas of Persia in 1613, headed by his trusted noble Khan Alam, which remained there until 1620. Diplomatic missions notwithstanding, the Persians seized Qandahar from the Mughals in 1622.

The artist Bishandas was ordered to accompany the 1613 Mughal mission to the Persian court, specifically to make accurate pictures of the shah and his nobles. Jahangir notes in his memoirs that Bishandas was especially skilled in portraiture.

At the time when I sent Khan Alam to Persia, I had sent with him a painter of the name of Bishn Das, who was unequaled in his age for taking likenesses, to take the portraits of the Shah and the chief men of his State, and bring them. He had drawn the likenesses of most of them, and especially had taken that of my brother the Shah exceedingly well, so that when I showed it to any of his servants, they said it was exceedingly well drawn.[1]

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Fig. 1. *Jahangir Embracing Shah Abbas*, Abul Hasan, India, ca. 1618, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, sheet 21.6 x 14.3, image 15.4 x 8.0 cm. Freer Gallery of Art — Purchase, F45.9

This painting of a Safavid noble may well have been one that Bishandas executed during his lengthy stay at the Persian court from 1613 to 1619. The attribution is contained in the gold cartouche to the right of the figure.

Like many other Jahangiri artists, Bishandas started his career in the atelier of Akbar (reigned 1556–1605). One of the earliest manuscripts on which he worked was the *Anvar-i-suhaili*, or "Lights of Canopus," of 1596–97, now in the Bharat Kala Bhavan at Varanasi.[2] As early as 1603, he seems to have moved to the workshop of Prince Salim, later emperor Jahangir.[3] Among his finest works is the superb signed drawing *House of Shaikh Phul;* also attributed to him is the vibrant *Birth of Jahangir* from the *Jahangirnama*.[4] Few signed portraits by him exist from the early years of Jahangir's reign. One exception is a 1608 portrait of Raja Suraj Singh Rathor of Jodhpur.[5] Most of his portraits seem to have been painted either in Iran or after his return to the Mughal court.

An inscription in the lower left corner of the painting — "in the likeness of Saru Taqi" — identifies this Safavid courtier. Considered one of the most influential seventeenth-century Safavid politicians, courtiers, and patrons of architecture, the eunuch Mirza Muhammad Taqi, known as Mirza Taqi or Saru Taqi (Taqi of the Fair Hair), was born around 1579 in Tabriz. He joined the army and quickly moved up the ranks. In 1616, Shah Abbas appointed him governor of the northern province of Mazandaran, where he was entrusted with the construction of several royal palaces, roads, and bridges. In 1634, Shah Abbas's successor, Shah Safi (reigned 1629–42), named Saru Taqi grand vizier, a position he held until his murder in 1645.

Known for his administrative skills and incorruptibility, Saru Taqi established a highly efficient administrative system and succeeded in raising state revenues to levels previously unknown in Iran. In the course of time, however, he reportedly became rigid and autocratic. His behavior not only earned him numerous enemies, but it also worked against the interest of the state. For instance, Saru Taqi's reluctance in 1638 to renew a tax concession caused the governor of Qandahar to place himself and the province under the jurisdiction of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan.

This portrait of Saru Taqi may have been based either on direct observation or

Fig. 2. *Jahangir Entertains Shah Abbas*, India, ca. 1620, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 25.0 x 18.3 cm. Freer Gallery of Art — Purchase, F42.16

on a sketch made during Bishandas's stay in Iran. Saru Taqi was certainly important enough to have attended the many gatherings in honor of Khan Alam and the other members of the Mughal delegation at which Bishandas would have encountered him. This painting is a relatively rare portrait of a significant Safavid historical figure drawn by a celebrated Mughal painter. As such, it is much like Hashim's likeness of Muhammad Ali Beg, the Safavid ambassador to Shah Jahan's court,[6] who is also included in two *darbar* scenes in the *Padshahnama* at Windsor Castle.[7]

This work serves as a significant addition to the Freer Gallery of Art's important holdings of Mughal painting, particularly in relation to two celebrated examples from the St. Petersburg Album, both inspired by troubled Mughal-Safavid relations. Preoccupied with the rising power of Shah Abbas, Jahangir commissioned these paintings to reflect his dreams and aspirations. In *Jahangir Embracing Shah Abbas*, painted around 1618, the artist Abul Hasan portrayed a somewhat frail Shah Abbas balanced on a lamb and enveloped by a larger-than-life Jahangir standing erect upon a lion (fig. 1). Having little to do with historical fact, the work clearly reflects the fulfillment of Jahangir's wish at the hands of artist Abul Hasan. *Jahangir Entertains Shah Abbas*, most likely dating to around 1620, similarly represents a purely imaginary meeting of the two rulers, with Jahangir once again given greater prominence (fig. 2). Though not by Bishandas, this work was evidently painted after his return from the Persian court, for its likeness of Shah Abbas is based on the artist's portraits.[8] It depicts Khan Alam holding the Shahin falcon that had been presented to him as a farewell gift by the shah. The daggers with walrus ivory hilts seen in the painting were sent to Jahangir by the shah in 1619.

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NOTES

1. Jahangir, *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, or Memoirs of Jahangir*, ed. Henry Beveridge, vol. 2 (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1910–14), pp. 116–17.

2. Asok Kumar Das, *Mughal Painting During Jahangir's Time* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1978), p. 193.

3. Ibid., pp. 193–94.

4. Milo Cleveland Beach, *The Grand Mogul: Imperial Painting in India 1600–1660* (Williamstown, Mass.: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1978), pp. 107–9.

5. Asok Kumar Das, *Mughal Painting*, p. 194, plate 35.

6. Minto Album, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 25–1925.

7. Milo Cleveland Beach and Ebba Koch, with new translations by Wheeler Thackston, *King of the World: The Padshahnama—An Imperial Mughal Manuscript from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle* (London: Azimuth Editions, 1997). See *The Weighing of Shah Jahan on his 40th Birthday*, plates 12–13, and *Shah Jahan Receives Persian Ambassador Muhammad Ali Beg*, plate 17.

8. Ernst J. Grube and Eleanor Sims, "The Representations of Shah Abbas I," in *Studi in onore di Eugenio Galdieri* (Lugano: Edizioni Arte e Moneta, 1995), pp. 177–208. Apart from knowing that Bishandas "took the portrait" of Shah Abbas, surviving examples include plates III, VII a, b, c, d, and X a, c. See also Basil W. Robinson, "Shah Abbas and the Mughal Ambassador Khan 'Alam," *Burlington Magazine* 114 (1972): 58–63.

Emperor Awrangzeb in a Shaft of Light

Attributed to Hunhar (active 1640s–1660s), from the St. Petersburg Album
India, Mughal, ca. 1660
Borders by Muhammad Baqir, Iran, 1758
Reverse: calligraphy by Mir Imad al-Husayni, Iran, ca. 1551–1615
Borders by Muhammad-Hadi, Iran, 1758–59
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
Overall 47.2 x 32.2 cm
F1996.1ab

Emperors of the Mughal dynasty, founded by the Timurid prince Babur in 1526, frequently used images of light to describe their status and ancestry. They referred to themselves as the "lamp of the house of Timur" (who is often known in the West as Tamerlane), from whom they proudly claimed descent. The Mughals traced their lineage even further back to the semimythical Mongol queen Alanquva, who is said to have conceived through a heavenly light,[1] thereby initiating a line of rulers whose glory passed through Mongol warrior Chingiz Khan and Timur to Mughal emperor Akbar (reigned 1556–1605). In the *Ain-i-Akbari*, or "Institutes of Akbar," royalty is described as "a light emanating from God, and a ray from the sun, the illuminator of the universe. . . . It is communicated by God to kings without the intermediate assistance of anyone."[2] Such light was conveyed visually by painting glowing halos to surround the heads of monarchs.

The concept of divine light being communicated directly and dramatically from God to emperors seems to have found its first expression in a painting of Shah Jahan (reigned 1628–58) with his influential minister Asaf Khan, whose daughter Mumtaz Mahal was the emperor's chief queen. Inscribed to Bichitr and painted around the year 1650, this painting is in the collection of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery (fig. 1). A shaft of light illuminating the emperor descends from a cloud-enclosed figure resembling God the Father, apparently inspired by European prints, while angels applaud the event. The present nighttime painting of Mughal emperor Awrangzeb (reigned 1658–1707), who is illuminated by a dramatic shaft of moonlight suggesting his apotheosis, may be seen in part as a triumphant continuation of an established tradition. In its use of moon imagery, however, it introduces a range of additional meanings.

In this evocative painting, Awrangzeb is seated in an enclosed courtyard beneath a massive building with European-style piers and architrave, while a garden is visible behind the high wall to the left. In the upper right of the painting, the clouds have parted, allowing a shaft of moonlight to bathe the emperor with an unearthly light. The shaft of light is intended, no doubt, to depict the heavens' blessings on Awrangzeb upon his self-declaration as emperor, and the divine sanction of his right to rule, following a bloody war of succession in which he killed his brothers and imprisoned his father.[3]

The painting's garden setting seems to refer to Awrangzeb's first coronation on July 21, 1658, at Agharabad (later called Shalimar), an imperial garden thirteen kilometers northwest of Delhi. But its triumphant symbolism also commemorates his second coronation, celebrated nearly one year later, once his victory in the protracted battle of succession was almost complete. Set in the imperial seat of power, the Red Fort at Delhi, this second coronation was feted over a period of two months. The painting was probably commissioned to reflect both coronations.[4]

The moon and the light it casts — the only charged element in the painting — are central to its meaning in many ways. The moon isolates and aggrandizes Awrangzeb, the sole figure upon which it shines, but the moon is also a symbol of Awrangzeb. Khafi Khan, a contemporaneous Mughal historian and panegyrist, described a court ceremony dating from the early years of Awrangzeb's reign: "The Emperor . . . sat like a shining moon in the sign of Libra."[5] The coins issued at the time of his second coronation were likewise inscribed: "This coin has been stamped on earth like the shining full moon / By Awrangzeb, the Conqueror of the World."[6]

Fig. 1. *Shah-Jahan with Asaf Khan*, India, ca. 1650, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, 26.3 x 18.7 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, purchase — Smithsonian Unrestricted Trust Funds, Smithsonian Collections Acquisition Program, and Dr. Arthur M. Sackler, S86.403

The moon is a symbol not only of the emperor but also of divine truth. The key to this second meaning is once again suggested by Khafi Khan. In an allegorical verse interpolated into his account of the second coronation, the Mughal historian exclaimed, "The courtyard of my heart opened like a sunflower, because the truth appeared and swept clean the dust of falsehood."[7] Thus, in a reading that extends the meaning of Khafi Khan's imagery, the enclosed courtyard is a heart, but it is also India. And the truth, as revealed by God to Awrangzeb, swept clean the dust of falsehood in every heart (a reference to the supporters of his eldest brother Prince Dara Shikoh during the coronation struggle) and throughout India.

The youth holding a fly whisk and facing the emperor appears to be his second-born son, Muhammad Mu'azzam (1643–1712); his eldest son, Muhammad Sultan (1639–1677), was in prison for having supported Awrangzeb's brother Shah Shuja. Seated below the prince is a court musician with lips parted in song and a lutelike *vina* at hand; he may be Khushal Khan Kalawant,

a singer and chief musician at the imperial court.[8]

This painting was among a group of pages that left India in 1739 with loot taken to Iran by Nadir Shah following his sack of Delhi. There the page was remounted within floral borders signed by Persian artist Muhammad Baqir in 1758. It was mounted back to back with a page of calligraphy in nastaliq script attributable to Persian calligrapher Mir Imad al-Husayni, who worked from circa 1595 to 1615. The calligraphic page was mounted within an outer margin of black vine interlaced with naked putti and a red inner margin with floral scroll; the blue border decorated with gold interlaced floral tendrils is signed by Persian artist Muhammad Hadi and dated 1758–59. The pages left Tehran early in this century and were dispersed into European collections, including that of Tsar Nicholas II, thereby giving the album its current name of the St. Petersburg Album.

Paintings from Awrangzeb's reign are few since the emperor's increasing orthodoxy caused him to reduce sharply the number of painters employed by the imperial workshop. This painting, as one of the first commissioned by Awrangzeb, was executed by its artist as if Shah Jahan were still the patron. It complements the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery's painting of Shah Jahan (see fig. 1), the only other known work of heavenly light transmitted to emperors, and makes a valuable addition to the rich body of Mughal painting in the Freer Gallery of Art.

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Milo Cleveland Beach and Ebba Koch, with new translations by Wheeler Thackston, *King of the World: The Padshahnama — An Imperial Mughal Manuscript from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle* (London: Azimuth Editions, 1997), p. 124, fig. 18.

NOTES

1. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, trans. H. Beveridge (Delhi: Ess Ess Publications, 1973), 1:179.

2. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, trans. H. Blochmann (reprint, New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, 1977), 1:3.

3. Awrangzeb, Shah Jahan's third son, defeated his three brothers — the eldest, Dara Shikoh, and princes Shuja and Murad — in three successive battles, from which they fled in disgrace. After his second coronation, he had them captured and then arranged for their deaths. See John F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 151–64.

4. I am grateful to Terence McInerney, who provided much assistance and information.

5. Khafi Khan, *Khafi Khan's History of Alamgir*, trans. S. Moinul Haq (Karachi: Pakistan Historical Society, 1975), p. 115.

6. Jadunath Sarkar, *History of Awrangzeb: Mainly Based on Persian Sources* (reprint, Bombay: Orient Longmans, 1972–74), 2:385.

7. Khafi Khan, *History*, p. 83.

8. This identification is only speculative as no other portraits of Khushal Khan Kalawant are known. However, he was a very important figure. During the festivities celebrating the inauguration of the third year of Awrangzeb's reign, Khushal Khan was weighed in coin and awarded seven thousand silver rupees.

The Goddess Worshiped by Rishi Cyavana

India, Punjab Hills, Basohli or Nurpur,
ca. 1670
Color and gold on paper with applied
beetle wing cases
21.3 x 23.1 cm
F1997.8

Between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, when much of northern India was under the rule of the Mughal emperors, an entire range of small Hindu kingdoms in Rajasthan and the Punjab Hills was in the hands of monarchs who were Rajputs (literally, "sons of kings"). The kingdoms in the Rajasthan plains, like Mewar with its capital at Udaipur, had earlier painting traditions of their own. Artists at these courts selected features of the imperial Mughal style that appealed to them and marginally altered their earlier mode to create a distinctive style. The kingdoms in the Punjab Hills, on the other hand, arose a century or so later, and the origins of painting in these courts are far from clear.

This painting of the Goddess was created about 1670, at the very beginning of the tradition of painted manuscripts in the small kingdoms of Basohli and Nurpur, on opposite banks of the Ravi River in the Punjab Hills. It is part of the spectacular Tantric Devi series celebrating the Goddess, which originally included at least seventy paintings. The series is not intact, and the existing thirty or so paintings are now dispersed among a number of private collections and museums.[1]

These paintings have an aura of untamed magnificence and wild luxury. Intense, hot colors applied in many layers create a rich surface texture. The expressive, almost ecstatic figures of these paintings, dressed in richly colored and patterned cloth, have large, passionate eyes and a firm gaze. The style appears abruptly, displaying astonishing poise, startling color, and an unusual interest in jewels: beetle wing cases simulate emeralds, and raised white paint looks like pearls. The paintings may appear folklike at first sight, but we know that they were produced for a highly sophisticated court.

In recent years B. N. Goswamy has worked on attributing paintings to individual artists rather than to courts. In this case, pilgrims' records preserved at the holy city of Hardvar, where the Ganges descends to the plains, indicate that the family of artists who produced this style of painting belonged to the state of Nurpur.[2] However, when painter Devidasa from Nurpur was commissioned to produce a manuscript of the *Rasamanjari* (Garland of delights) for Raja Kirpal Pal of Basohli (reigned 1678–93), he specifically states in the colophon that he completed it in the town of Vishvasthali (today's Basohli) on the banks of the Airavati (today's Ravi). While Devidasa hailed from Nurpur, he was happy to cross the Ravi River to work for a generous patron of an adjoining friendly state. One might keep in mind, too, that kingdoms in the Punjab Hills were small; Basohli was thirty-two kilometers long by twenty-four wide, while the larger kingdom of Nurpur was forty-eight kilometers long by thirty-two wide. Goswamy's attribution of the Devi paintings to Devidasa's father, the painter Kripal, who is known solely from pilgrims' entries, is based entirely on stylistic comparison with the work of Devidasa. Kripal himself did not leave a single signed painting, and the suggestion that he is the early master responsible for the magnificent Devi paintings remains entirely speculative.

The spiritual intensity of the series, intended for meditation accompanied by recitation, is remarkable. The present painting, numbered 59 in the series,[3] portrays Bhadrakali, a deity normally represented as fierce and dark skinned (Kali means "dark one"). But here she is portrayed as a stunning golden-skinned deity with a radiant face, a crown adorned with the crescent moon and lotuses, and hennaed hands and

Fig. 1. *The Goddess Bhadrakali Worshiped by the Gods,* India, ca. 1660–70, opaque watercolor and gold on paper with applied beetle wings, 21.7 x 21.5 cm. Freer Gallery of Art — Purchase, F1984.42

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feet. Radiating energy and dynamism despite her seated posture, this apparently gentle goddess rests upon the recumbent figure of a corpulent male corpse. She holds a discus, conch shell, lotus, and mace, all attributes of the god Vishnu and not seen in other Devi images in this series. Without the inscriptions one might have described her as Vaishnavi, the female counterpart, or *shakti*, of Vishnu. Yet, the notation in the right margin in Takri script reads Bhadrakali, or "Auspicious Kali," and the Sanskrit verse inscribed on the back addresses her as such. The same name is used to invoke her in another Freer Gallery of Art painting from the series, numbered 42, in which Bhadrakali, who stands upon a male corpse, is indeed deep blue in color and fierce in appearance and is invoked by the gods Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva (fig. 1). The present painting seems to suggest that the fierce Bhadrakali manifested herself in this gentle golden form in response to the invocation of the *rishi*, or sage Cyavana, a devout Vaishnava and an ancient physician of note, who sits before her on a deerskin.

Most paintings in this series focus on the Goddess, but here considerable space is given to the sage, identified by a Takri label in the left margin and also by the Sanskrit verse on the back. Cyavana *rishi*, sporting a beard and topknot, is a handsome figure who wears an orange dhoti and an antelope skin draped across his shoulders. He has a Vaishnava mark on his forehead and various other sectarian marks on his arms and legs. He holds a long rosary, and, surprisingly for a *rishi*, is bejeweled. It is interesting to speculate upon the similar sectarian marks on the giant corpse that forms the seat for Devi. It, too, has a series of marks on its body, and circular patterns on the feet

are similar to those seen on Cyavana's feet. Are we to read this figure as a brahmin? And, if so, is the painting intended to suggest the triumph of the tantric tradition over traditional Hindu worship?

Surrounding Cyavana *rishi* is a grove of stylized trees with enlarged leaves, painted in a range of hues from yellow, orange-mauve, and green to almost black. The only tree in the grove that sprouts blossoms is one that conceals from view the head of the Goddess's corpse-seat. As is usual in this series, the sky is indicated at the top of the painting by a narrow strip of white streaked with blue.

One other painting from the Devi series, numbered 30 and in the collection of the Lahore Museum, is known to portray a *rishi*, identified by the Sanskrit inscription as Shandilya.[4] He has the same beard and topknot, wears a yellow dhoti, and carries the antelope skin drape across his shoulders. He, too, is bejeweled, an unlikely adornment for an anchorite. This emphasis on gems lends credence to the hypothesis that the style, whether originating in Basohli or Nurpur, had close connections with a jewelry tradition. Shandilya has his palms joined in the praying gesture of *anjali mudra* as he faces the standing image of the Goddess, who is addressed in its Sanskrit verse as Sharada Bhagavati and who holds bow, arrow, sword, and trident in four of her six arms. Shandilya, too, wears a Vaishnava mark on his forehead and sectarian marks on his body. The goddess who appears to him is light skinned, though not as golden as she is in the Cyavana painting.

On the basis of religious affiliation, doubts have been voiced about assigning the commission of the Devi paintings to the court of Basohli since its ruler Sangram Pal (1635–73) was a devotee of Vishnu, who himself wore the Vaishnava mark on his forehead. In addition, a 1688 document of a successor Kirpal Pal describes him as a devotee of Vishnu.[5] The objection raised questions the possibility that a ruler who worshiped Vishnu would have commissioned a series of paintings that glorify the Goddess and are clearly intended for meditation and devotion. But there is really no contradiction here. Whatever deity was a monarch's special focus, his *ishtha devata*, it was invariably the Goddess to whom he turned to seek victory in battle. This age-old practice dates all the way back to Rama, ideal king and hero of the epic *Ramayana*, who just prior to embarking on his major battle with Ravana, worshiped the goddess Durga to bring him victory. Later rulers, such as the Vijayanagara emperors, followed this practice; they invoked Durga at the end of the Mahanavami, or "Great Nine Nights" festival, immediately prior to embarking on the war-related activities that were obligatory during the first half of each year.[6] Arjuna, hero of the *Mahabharata* epic, also invoked the Goddess before embarking upon the great battle that is central to the epic. It is then perfectly in order for a monarch who normally worshiped Vishnu to invoke the Goddess to grant him victory in battle. In fact, Devi worship formed an essential part of every monarch's rituals.

The Sanskrit invocation on the reverse of this Devi painting reads:

Her face radiates heat
like that of penance-heated Durga—
Wearing yellow garments
body glowing like a topaz
four-armed, she sits upon a corpse
in the hermitage of rishi *Cyavana—*
I meditate upon Bhadrakali
with the seed mantra "Bhaim."[7]

Judging from the manner in which the artist used gold paint to make the body of the Goddess glow "like a topaz," he must have read the Sanskrit verse that accompanied the painting or had it explained to him in the local Pahadi, or hill, dialect. This painting is a major contribution to our understanding of the Tantric Devi series and a significant addition to the Freer Gallery of Art's small collection of paintings from the Punjab Hills.

Vidya Dehejia

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B. N. Goswamy and Eberhard Fischer, *Pahari Masters: Court Painters of Northern India* (Zurich: Artibus Asiae Publishers, 1992), pp. 38–39.

NOTES

1. For a complete discussion of the paintings in this series, see Terence McInerney, "Mysterious Origins: The *Tantric Devi* Series from Basohli," in *Devi: The Great Goddess*, ed. Vidya Dehejia, forthcoming.

2. B. N. Goswamy and Eberhard Fischer, *Pahari Masters: Court Painters of Northern India* (Zurich: Artibus Asiae Publishers, 1992), pp. 30–34.

3. Ibid., pp. 38–39, where the number is read as 57. While the numbering in Takri in the upper left margin does seem to be 57, the Sanskrit on the reverse is clearly 59. I believe the Takri number is a careless error (Takri number 9 inverted is Takri number 7), since another painting from the series is clearly labeled 57 in both Takri and Sanskrit. See Terence McInerney, introduction to *Indian Painting, 1525–1825* (London: David Carritt, 1982), pp. 70–71.

4. F. S. Aijazuddin, *Pahari Paintings and Sikh Portraits in the Lahore Museum* (London and New York: Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1977), p. 3, illustrations on p. 6.

5. This information is contained in a colophon to a treatise on medicine, the *Sushrata*, produced for him. See W. G. Archer, *Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills* (London: Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1973), 1:17.

6. Burton Stein, "Mahanavami: Medieval and Modern Kingly Ritual in South India," in *Essays on Gupta Culture*, ed. Bardwell L. Smith (Delhi: South Asia Books, 1983), pp. 67–92.

7. Translation by Vidya Dehejia.

Darbar of Eighteen Princes

India, Deccan, probably Hyderabad, ca. 1680
Opaque watercolor on paper
27 x 41 cm
F1997.29ab

The exact place of origin of this finely delineated painting of eighteen richly attired princes, seated in a formal *darbar*, or royal assembly, at an unidentified Deccani court, is difficult to pinpoint. The workmanship of the figures, all depicted in strict profile, seems to combine the delicate line typical of artists of the court of Golconda (1512–1687) with a touch of the earthiness associated with the Bijapur court (1489–1686). *Darbar of Eighteen Princes* appears to date just prior to the 1686–87 absorption of the Deccani sultanates into the Mughal empire. It seems probable that *Darbar* was painted in the Golconda capital of Hyderabad, where it became the custom for artists to produce portrait albums of various Mughal and Deccani notables.[1]

If the quality of line and the character of the work seem a touch Persianate, one may recall that the founder of the Qutb Shahi dynasty of Golconda was a Turkman Black Sheep (Qara Qoyunlu) prince who fled Iran for India when he was defeated by the White Sheep (Aq Qoyunlu) clan. The influence of Turkman Iran is clearly evident in the early painted manuscripts from Golconda, such as the *Kulliyat* (Collection) of Sultan Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah (reigned 1580–1626). The political and artistic situation changed in 1635 under Sultan Abdullah (reigned 1626–72) when Golconda was transformed into a Mughal protectorate. Diplomatic contacts with Delhi increased, and the realism of Mughal painting came to be much admired. Within ten years of his accession, Mughal emperor Awrangzeb (1658–1707), who initially sponsored the imperial painting workshop, began to react against the art of painting as being contrary to the tenets of Islam, and he severely reduced the number of artists at the imperial capital, if not dispensed with them altogether. Awrangzeb himself spent more and more time in the Deccan, where he engaged in a variety of military campaigns designed to put down numerous rebellions in the region. With centralized royal patronage curtailed, Mughal artists migrated in various directions — to Rajasthan, toward the Punjab Hills, and to the Deccan, where they received patronage from nobles at the various Deccani sultanates.

When Sultan Abul Hasan (reigned 1672–87) ascended the Golconda throne, a distinct Bijapuri stylistic strand became evident in Golconda paintings. Prior to assuming the throne, the devout Abul Hasan had been living in the holy city of Gulbarga, then a part of the kingdom of Bijapur, where the tomb of the fifteenth-century Sufi mystic Gesudaraz was located. It seems quite likely that Bijapuri artists accompanied the royal party to Hyderabad. The princes of this *Darbar of Eighteen Princes* may be compared to a series of individual portraits of kings, courtiers, and saints produced for Sultan Abul Hasan.[2] The tautly erect bodies, patterned clothing, turbans, and cool colors are all reminiscent of these Golconda works.

After Awrangzeb's capture of the five Deccani sultanates in 1686–87, a system of Mughal governors was instituted, and Hyderabad, chosen as the seat of Deccani Mughal power, remained an active center of painting. The quality of the portraiture in *Darbar of Eighteen Princes* can be closely compared to a large Hyderabadi portrait of a noble, identified by its inscription as Nawab Abdul Ghaffar Khan Bahadur, which was painted in the last quarter of the seventeenth century.[3] Stylistic considerations suggest that *Darbar of Eighteen Princes* was painted somewhat earlier, around 1680; it is also earlier than a picture from Aurangabad of around 1700 that portrays *Twenty Strange People and a Bewildered Dog*.[4]

A series of neatly inscribed names in nastaliq script has been added above or beside the figures. These labels identify the nobles, though quite erroneously, as Mughal emperors and princes dating all the way from Babur (reigned 1526–30) to Bahadur Shah (reigned 1719–48). Reading from right to left, the figures in the upper row are identified as Shah Jahan, Bahadur Shah, Dara Shikoh, Bahadur Shah, Babur Shah, Alamgir (son of Shah Jahan), Farrukhsiyar, Humayun Padshah, and Abu Said. The bottom row purportedly features Muhammad Shah, Jahangir Padshah, Azam Shah, Ali Gobar, Parbali, Akbar Shah, Farrukhsiyar, and Babur Shah. If the painting dates to around 1680, as stylistic considerations suggest, the neatly written labels that so totally misidentify Mughal emperors and princes must have been written at a later date, apparently during or after the reign of Bahadur Shah. (Bahadur Shah and his predecessor Farrukhsiyar, who reigned from 1713 to 1719, are each named twice in the labels.) As more and more Deccani paintings come to light, we possibly may be able to identify, by their precise features, the princes seated in this prestigious assembly. For the moment, they must remain anonymous.

A page of nineteenth-century Persian calligraphy with colored borders is on the reverse. This *darbar* scene, like many other Mughal and Deccani paintings, apparently found its way to Iran, where it was remounted against a page of later Iranian calligraphy.

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NOTES

1. Mark Zebrowski, *Deccani Painting* (London: Sotheby Publications, 1983), p. 194, points out that albums of such portraits are in the British Museum, London; the Rijksprentenkabinet, Amsterdam; the Musée Guimet, Paris; and the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

2. Ibid., figs. 157–60.

3. Ibid., fig. 181.

4. Stuart Cary Welch, "A Matter of Empathy: Comical Indian Pictures," *Asian Art and Culture* 7, no. 3 (Fall 1994): fig. 13, titled *Twenty Strange People and a Bewildered Dog*, probably Aurangabad, ca. 1700.

PURCHASE
FREER GALLERY OF ART
75TH ANNIVERSARY

فرخ سیر
پسر شاه جهان
عالمگیر شاه
بهادر شاه
دارا شکوه
پسر بهادر شاه
شاه جهان
فرخ سیر
اکبر شاه
پسر باب
عالی گوهر
عاظم شاه
جهانگیر بادشاه
محمد شاه

Double-sided paintings from a temple hanging

1

Recto: Crowned god Balarama
Verso: Crowned Vishnu as enshrined at Tirupati

2

Recto: Noble devotee
Verso: Divine sages Narada and Tumburu

South India, Tamil Nadu, probably painted at Tirupati, early 18th century
Opaque watercolor, gold, and paper appliqué on cotton
Overall 21.7 x 12.4 cm
S1998.113–.114

South Indian paintings on cloth and paper have begun to emerge for study only in the last twenty years or so, making them a relatively recent area for scholarship. While the murals in the southern temples and palaces have long been known, as has the genre of gold and gem-studded Tanjore paintings on wood, the rest of the field has remained obscure.[1] These two double-sided paintings on cloth appear to have belonged to a series that formed an accordion-like temple hanging celebrating the glory of god Vishnu. One painting features the crowned figure of Balarama, half brother of god Krishna, who frequently appears in south India as one of the ten incarnations of Vishnu. Holding his identifying attribute, the *hala*, or ploughshare, Balarama directly faces the viewer, standing erect upon a pedestal beneath a canopy of flower garlands and individual pendant flowers including full lotus buds. On the reverse is the standing form of the deep blue god Vishnu, in the form in which he is enshrined in the famous temple at Tirupati. Framed by a *tirnvatchi* or aureole crowned by a lion-head, he holds discus and conch shell in his two rear hands, while one front hand is in the *varada* gesture of wish-granting and the other rests lightly on his thigh.

The second painting features devotees and divine sages rather than gods. The recto portrays a turbaned nobleman, standing beneath a canopy of flowers, hands humbly joined in the *anjali* gesture of adoration. Its reverse accommodates two divine musicians, Narada and Tumburu, standing beneath a canopy of flowers and garlands, providing music to honor Vishnu. Bearded and long-haired sage Narada, musician of the gods, clad in a tiger skin, plays the lute-like *vina* instrument with two hands; beside him horse-headed Tumburu strums the *tambura* to provide the accompaniment to Narada's music. At the upper right of both paintings is Persian lettering, unusual in a Hindu context, that appears to read "Raj Chass"; perhaps this was the name of the owner or patron of the hanging.

The painted images are exaggerated in their stylization, with heavy bulging proportions, strongly modeled joints, and thick contours. Faces are shown in profile or directly frontal, with a long nose and large staring eyes painted white. Limbs are curved and fully rounded, seemingly "inflated" by the life-breath known as *prana*. Colors are strong, and shading is used along the contours of the body to suggest three-dimensionality. While at first sight the images with their hypnotic stare may appear strange, their power and magnetism are indeed impressive.

The first south Indian paintings in this style to emerge, all doublesided, were variously assigned to the eastern state of Orissa, or to Mysore or Seringapatam in the southern state of Karnataka. Of two pages assigned to Seringapatam, one features baby Krishna sucking his toe while reclining on a leaf floating upon the cosmic ocean, and the second portrays Krishna raising the mountain Govardhana.[2] Two paintings of similar style in the collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art were assigned variously to nineteenth-century Orissa and to eighteenth-century Mysore. The recto of one features the Vaishnava group of Jagannatha, Lord of the Universe, together with Balarama and Subhadra, a threesome highly revered in the eastern state of Orissa. It was presumably this imagery, similar to that enshrined in the famous Jagannatha temple in the coastal town of Puri, that prompted the attribution of this painting to Orissa. The second painting, featuring baby Krishna on both sides, first stealing butter and then fighting the crane demon Bakasura, was assigned to Mysore.[3] Two other paintings, one featuring baby Krishna dancing with butter balls,[4] and a second featuring infant Krishna and his foster mother Yashoda, were likewise assigned to the Mysore region in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.[5] These various paintings are not part of the same set as the paintings under discussion here; none of them has Persian lettering, while some, but not all, have Devanagari script identifying the images. However, there seems little doubt that all these double-sided paintings were produced in the same region.

It would appear that the term "Tamil Nayaka" is a more appropriate label for these paintings, judging from their close stylistic similarity to those produced during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for decorating the walls and ceilings of Tamil Nadu temples like

[illegible] Vishnu as Vamana, south India, Tamil Nadu, probably painted at Tirupati, early 18th century, opaque watercolor, gold, and paper appliqué on cotton, overall 21.7 x 13.0 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery — Purchase, S1996.61

s1998.113 verso

Chidambaram or Tiruvarur, and palaces like Ramanathapuram. The human figures in such murals are depicted with the same heavy stylization, while the painted architecture on the walls of the Ramanathapuram palace commonly depict ceilings from which are suspended lotuses. While belonging to the tradition of the Tamil Nayaka dynasty (ca. 1529–1736), whose capital was at Madurai in southern Tamil Nadu, these paintings were most likely produced in its northernmost areas, and quite probably at the major Vaishnava temple center of Tirupati that is along the northern border of the state, adjoining the Telegu region of Andhra Pradesh. We may recall in this context that the Nayaka rulers appear to have interchangeably used the Telegu and Tamil language and script in the labels that were inscribed along the murals painted in their temples and palaces.

Other paintings from this same temple hanging, with the same Persian lettering,[6] are known. One in the collection of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery portrays on its recto Vishnu's dwarf incarnation known as Vamana (fig. 1) and on its verso Vishnu reclining in slumber upon the cosmic serpent. Now dispersed paintings from this series featured Vishnu's man-lion incarnation of Narasimha, as well as a painting of the Vaishnava group of Jagannatha.[7]

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1. The most comprehensive study of this material is a recent publication: George Michell, *Architecture and Art of Southern India: Vijayanagara and the Successor States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 220–70.

2. Stuart Cary Welch, *India: Art and Culture* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985), nos. 23a and 23b, pp. 57–60. The verso of the baby Krishna painting depicts a devotee adoring Vishnu, while the verso of the second features a devotee with palms joined in adoration.

3. Linda Leach, *Indian Miniature Paintings and Drawings: The Cleveland Museum of Art* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1986), nos. 97, 101. The verso of the Jagannatha painting features Rama and Sita, identified by a Devanagari label, together with attendants.

4. B. N. Goswamy, *Essence of Indian Art* (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 1986), no. 68, p. 104. Butterball Krishna has a standing Vishnu on its reverse.

5. Michell, *Architecture and Art of Southern India*, fig. 194, pp. 260–62.

6. The Persian lettering was used for the Dakhni (Deccani) script; Dakhni is a language in which southern words are added to the northern Urdu, which is itself an admixture of Persian with old Punjabi.

7. Personal communication from Terence McInerney.

The Royal Ladies of Maharaja Pratap Singh

Attributed to Sahiba Ram
(active ca. 1740–1800)
India, Rajasthan, Jaipur school,
ca. 1780–1800
Opaque watercolor, gold, and silver
on paper
Overall 46.4 x 44.5 cm
S1997.70

This striking fragment depicting two sumptuously attired ladies comes from a large painting from the Hindu princely state of Jaipur in Rajasthan. That work almost certainly portrayed Maharaja Pratap Singh (reigned 1779–1803) surrounded by the ladies of the royal harem. Pratap Singh's body, in the strict profile favored by Indian painters, is still visible from the neck down. Of the surrounding women, one holds a hookah, a second a wine cup and flask, and a third raises a wine cup to her lips. Their splendid dress is magnificently rendered while the lavish use of gold and silver paint, with the raised application of paint accentuating their elaborate jewels. More than a study for a wall painting, this is the surviving portion of a full-sized portrait of Jaipur royalty.

Not many paintings from Jaipur are in Western collections, largely because its royal collections were not dispersed as were those in other states of Rajasthan and the Punjab Hills. Jaipur, which was known as Amber until the new capital city was founded by Jai Singh II in 1727, lacks a continuous history of painting. The Hindu rajas of Jaipur were among the first to extend cooperation to the Mughals, with Raja Bhar Mal (reigned 1548–75) giving his daughter in marriage to Mughal emperor Akbar (reigned 1556–1605) and his granddaughter to Jahangir (reigned 1605–27). Raja Man Singh (reigned 1590–1615) was more than an ally of the Mughals; he became Akbar's trusted general. Early painting in Jaipur was heavily modeled on the Mughal pattern. A more typical Jaipur style emerged during the eighteenth century, when painting flourished under Maharaja Pratap Singh, a scholar, poet, and ardent worshiper of the Hindu god Krishna. Pratap Singh employed more than twenty artists in his royal workshop.[1]

This painting of Pratap Singh's royal ladies can be attributed to one of the most renowned of Jaipur court painters, Sahiba Ram.[2] Particularly celebrated as a portrait painter, Sahiba Ram created a number of impressive, life-size portraits of Jaipur maharajas Iswari Singh (reigned 1743–50), Madho Singh (reigned 1750–67), and Pratap Singh that are currently on display in the Jaipur Palace Museum. Some were painted with watercolor on paper and others with a type of lacquer known as *chandras* on cloth. Sometimes, instead of painting jewelry, as he has done in this instance, Sahiba Ram pasted or fixed wood pieces of different shapes and sizes onto his pictures and then painted them to give a three-dimensional impression of real jewelry. Often he affixed steel bosses onto painted shields. The visual effect of such a technique, unique to Sahiba Ram, was quite dramatic. Jaipur archival records document the sanction of cash for Sahiba Ram to maintain three assistants who, no doubt, helped him by preparing materials, tracing, and filling in colors.[3]

In the early twentieth century, A. K. Coomaraswamy collected a number of Sahiba Ram's drawings and cartoons from the artist's descendants. Two preparatory studies for a *rasamandala*, or "circle dance" of Krishna and the gopis, pricked for transfer to a palace wall, are now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.[4] The exceptional rarity of Sahiba Ram's paintings, most of which remain in the Jaipur Palace Museum collection, makes this flamboyant and colorful fragment from a once full-sized royal portrait a valuable acquisition.

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NOTES

1. Rita Pratap, *The Panorama of Jaipur Paintings* (New Delhi: D. K. Printworld, 1996), p. 184.

2. Ibid., pp. 183–84, color illustrations IX and XIII.

3. Ibid., p. 184. A record of 1763 mentions that Sahiba Ram received an increment in salary and was given permission to hire assistants. Records of 1758 and 1759 mention a government sanction of 30 rupees, 8 annas per month for the maintenance of three assistant artists.

4. Steven Kossak, *Indian Court Painting* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), nos. 74, 75.

PURCHASE
ARTHUR M. SACKLER
GALLERY
10TH ANNIVERSARY

Maharana Bhim Singh of Mewar at a Palace Window

Attributed to the workshop of Chokha
India, Udaipur, ca. 1810–20
Opaque watercolor and gold on cotton
143.4 x 107.2 cm
s1996.33

The Rajput kingdom of Mewar, with its early capital at Chitor and later at Udaipur, was governed by monarchs who assumed the royal title of *rana*. The Mewar *ranas* built a magnificent fort-palace along the lakefront and, like the Mughal emperors, placed immense value on the possession of a rich library of illustrated manuscripts. Rana Jagat Singh (reigned 1628–52), a great patron of the arts, commissioned artists to paint lavishly illustrated Hindu texts detailing the exploits of the Hindu gods, especially the *Ramayana* epic and the devotional tale of the god Krishna. The term "miniature" used to describe such page-sized Indian paintings is somewhat of a misnomer, but it is probably here to stay.

Starting with the reign of Ari Singh (1761–73), Mewar painting took a new direction as artists made the *rana* and his court the subject of their paintings, which they now began to produce upon unusually large surfaces, often a meter wide and more than half a meter high. A painting in this larger format, portraying Ari Singh (1761–73) worshiping a Shiva linga in a marble courtyard pavilion within the city palace, is part of the Freer Gallery of Art collection (fig. 1). Such paintings, which were no longer a part of any manuscript, depict the activities of the *rana* against multiperspectival palace settings or the hills and lakes surrounding Udaipur. Early in the eighteenth century, a trend arose for the creation of close to life-size portraits, painted on cloth, of the various Rajput monarchs,[1] including the Mewar *ranas*, for display on public occasions. It is possible that this trend may have received an additional boost during the last quarter of the eighteenth century as Mewar artists viewed life-size portraits painted in Lucknow by British artists such as Tilly Kettle (1735–86) and Johann Zoffany (1733–1810).[2]

When the first large-scale Rajput cloth portraits appeared on the market some twenty years ago, they aroused suspicion among an audience accustomed to the idea of Rajput paintings of a smaller size. As many more such large paintings surfaced, suspicions of forgery abated and scholars realized that paintings themselves provided hints regarding the existence of cloth portraits that had been regularly displayed as decoration in tent enclosures or in similar temporary spaces used for ceremonies. For instance, a painting depicting Rana Sangram Singh (reigned 1710–34) at the Mahanavami, or "Great Nine Nights" festival, which was conducted under the supervision of priests of the Nath sect that he favored, shows an encampment within which is a smaller pavilion for the display of a large portrait bust, in this case of the Nath high priest.[3] The reason few of these paintings survive lies in their inherent fragility, together with the constant stress of being rolled and unrolled; in fact, it is surprising that a cloth painting should be in as good a condition as this one.

Rana Bhim Singh (reigned 1778–1828) ruled Mewar during its years of adversity when it was repeatedly attacked by the Marathas, the new Hindu militant power

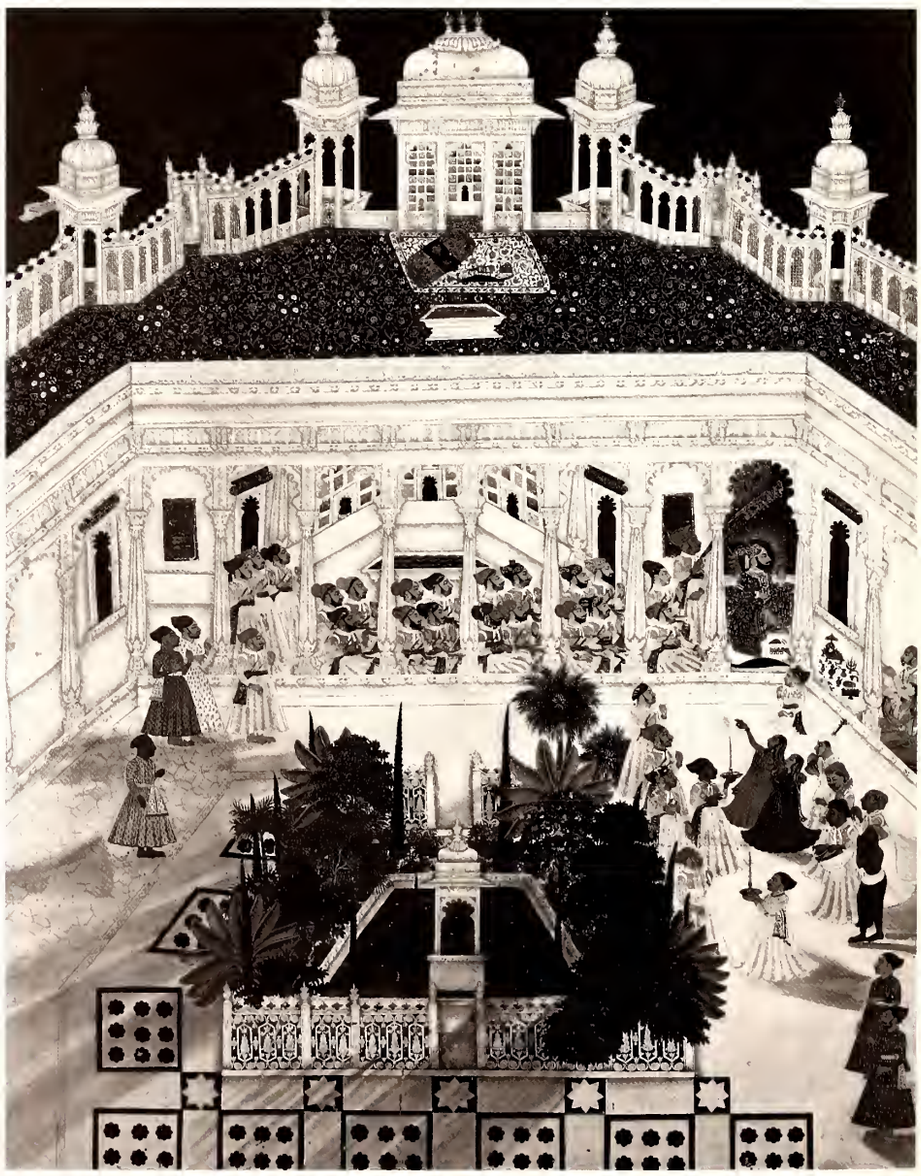

Fig. 1. *Maharana Ari Singh Performing Puja in a Palace Courtyard*, Udaipur, ca. 1810–20, opaque watercolor and gold on cotton, 143.4 x 107.2 cm, Freer Gallery of Art, Purchase, 1996.33

GIFT OF TERENCE
MCINERNEY
ARTHUR M. SACKLER
GALLERY
[illegible] ANNIVERSARY

that had thrown off its onetime allegiance to the Deccani sultans and occupied territories to Mewar's south. Mewar's power was in decline, and peace and order were restored only when its *ranas* sought British protection in 1818. Colonel James Tod arrived in Udaipur as the British agent and representative of the East India Company. Like his immediate ancestors, Bhim Singh sought solace in a wide range of pleasurable activities, including elaborate *tamashas*, or spectacles, such as the wrestling matches, elephant fights, and dance parties for which the Mewar court became renowned. Bhim Singh is also believed to have fathered almost one hundred children. Colonel Tod got to know him well and in his monumental work, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan,* wrote "Though able, wise and amiable, his talents were nullified by numerous weak points. Vain shows, frivolous amusements, and an ill-regulated liberality alone occupied him."[4] While Tod gives us much valuable information on Mewari life and customs, it would be wise to keep his colonialist agenda in mind. To the extent that Mewari rule seemed weak, Tod's own importance and position at court were enhanced.

In depicting Bhim Singh at a *jharokha,* or ceremonial balconied window, its ledge covered with vibrantly patterned cloth, the artist adopted a mode frequently used to portray Mughal emperors, thus contributing to Bhim Singh's desire for personal aggrandizement. The richly bejeweled *rana,* holding a sword upright in one hand, is framed within a cusped archway through which a deep blue sky and crescent moon are visible. While Bhim Singh is clearly recognizable, confirmation of the portrait's identity comes from the painted inscription on the simple block-printed textile that served as a "curtain" or protective covering for the painting. It reads: *Shri Maharaja-dhiraja Maharanaji Bhim Singhjiri sabi* (portrait of Maharana Bhim Singh, Great King of Kings). A closely related full-length portrait of Bhim Singh, standing in a totally informal stance, now in the collection of the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, England, has been attributed to the great painter

Chokha.[5] The close stylistic similarity of the present portrait to the Ashmolean example suggests that it may be assigned to the hand of the same workshop. As the first example of its kind in the collection of either the Freer Gallery of Art or the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, this large cloth painting helps enlarge our knowledge of the later development of the tradition of Rajput painting.

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1. Among the earliest extant portraits are those of the Jaipur monarchs who called themselves maharajas. The cloth portraits of Iswari Singh (reigned 1743–50) and his successors are on view in the Jaipur Palace Museum. See Rita Pratap, *The Panorama of Jaipur Paintings* (New Delhi: D. K. Printworld, 1996), p. 183.

2. Pratapaditya Pal and Vidya Dehejia, *From Merchants to Emperors: British Artists and India, 1757–1930* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 155.

3. Andrew Topsfield, *The City Palace Museum, Udaipur: Paintings of Mewar Court Life* (Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing, 1990), pp. 32–33.

4. James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan,* ed. W. Crooke (London: Oxford University Press, 1920), 1: 558.

5. J. C. Harle and Andrew Topsfield, *Indian Art in the Ashmolean Museum* (Oxford, England: Ashmolean Museum, 1987), p. 81, no. 90, plate 17.

Text Decoded

J. Swaminathan (1928–1994)
Signed and dated on the reverse in both English and Hindi, India, 1993
Oil and wax on canvas
115.0 x 170.5 cm
S1998.117

Jagdish Swaminathan, painter, critic, teacher, and founding member of Group 1890, was one of the most influential members of the contemporary art movement in India, and one who reflected and wrote extensively upon modernism and Indian art. He was a charismatic personality, respected by senior scholars and by the younger generation, all of whom spoke of him with affectionate regard as Swami, or with the added honorific "ji" (Swamiji), if they were junior.

Group 1890, shunning a descriptive label of any type, took its name from the number of the house in which the group of artists met in 1962. It comprised those who questioned the authenticity and validity of "senior" modern Indian artists working during the 1940s and 1950s — like Francis Newton Souza (born 1924), Akbar Padamsee (born 1928), Tyeb Mehta (born 1925), Maqbool Fida Husain (born 1915), and others — who had switched over completely to the Western mode. True, these "modern-expressionists" were indigenous representatives of a movement developed in the West, but that movement was now breathing its last in the capitals of world art.[1] Swaminathan agreed that looking to the West was unavoidable, but it was only because he felt that to go beyond the West it was necessary to go through the West.[2]

Equally, however, Swaminathan was aware of the dangers inherent in the work of artists who took pride in "tradition" — the "India-moderns" who "grafted half-digested concepts evolved by the modern movement in Western art onto indigenous folk and miniature styles to arrive at a compromise highly satisfying to the average mind."[3] He spoke of them as producing work "formalistically appealing to the eye and decorative in aspect but devoid of the vitality of miniature or folk art."[4] Disapproving of both extremes, he remarked that, paradoxical as it may seem, there was "hardly any difference between those who in the name of modernism imitate the Western masters and those who in the name of tradition copy from the past."[5]

What then was the way? Swaminathan understood all too well the quandary faced by Indian artists seeking acceptance on the world stage after the extended period of British rule had created a hiatus with traditional modes of expression. For him, however, the issue was not one of bringing the Indian movement up to the level of the moderns in the West, "but of taking to the world movement the Indian contribution."[6] He used a simple example to point to the vast conceptual distinctions between the two cultures that to him suggested the need for a different modus operandi: "To the West the lone individual is the lost, the groping individual. To us he is the arrived person."[7]

For Swaminathan it was impossible to overlook the values established by Indian art in the past if artists were to achieve recognition. In search of what he called the color geometry of space, he often quoted the ancient Upanishadic dictum:

The whole is this
The whole is that
The whole was born of the whole
Take whole from the whole
What remains is whole.[8]

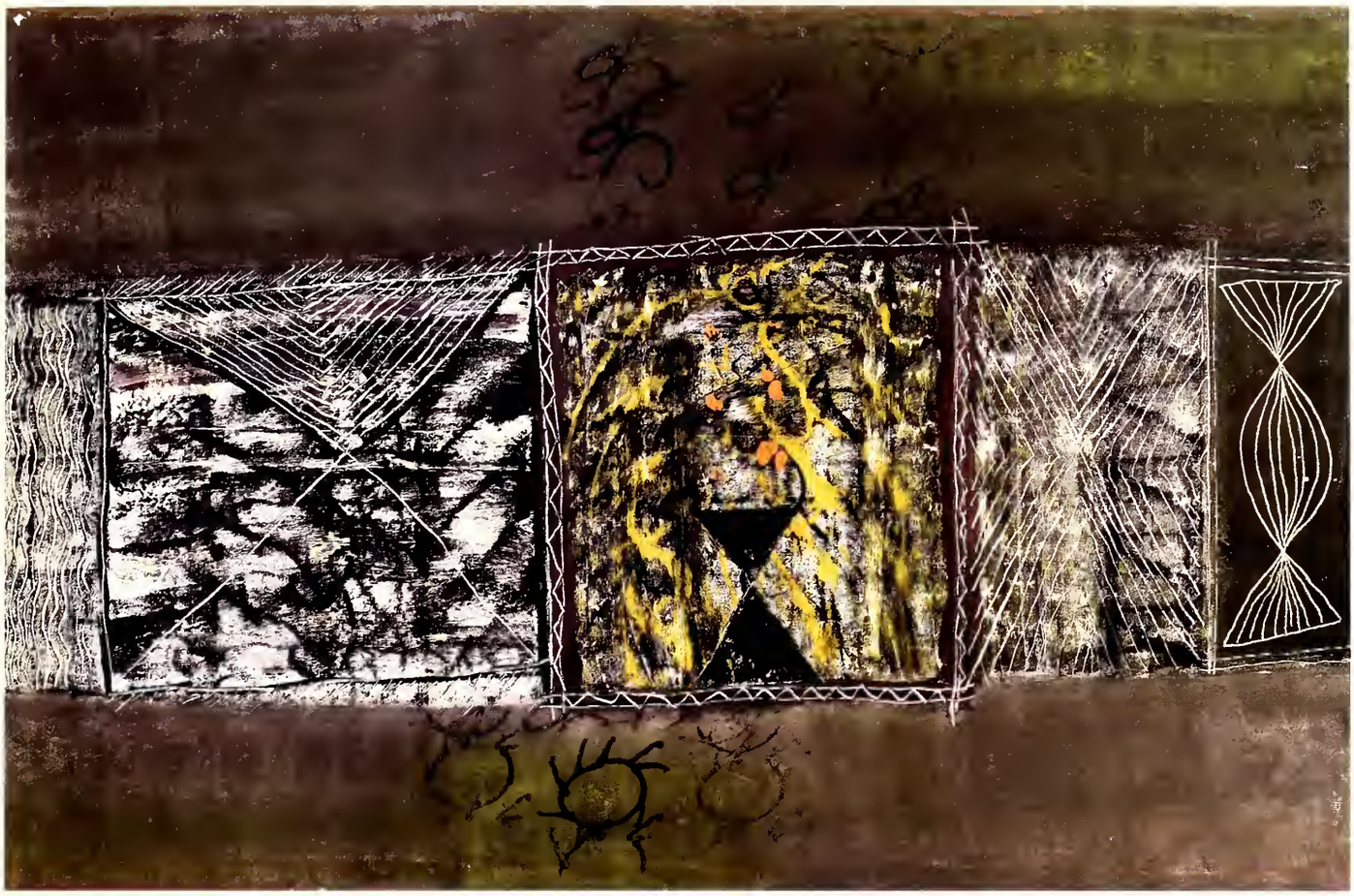
He spoke frequently of the magic inherent in geometry — of line, form, color and space — which he felt had been mastered by ancient Indian artists, whether in Jain miniatures or tantric yantras and mandalas. In his eloquent words: "The arrangement of cognizable form within the framework of color geometry can create the tangible feeling of alternate motion and rest, of appearance and disappearance; it can create the dimension of palpable sound, as well as the voice of silence."[9]

One of Swaminathan's artistic innovations, reflected in *Text Decoded*, exemplifies his belief that a concept of modernism that excluded folk and tribal art was unacceptable. He propounded instead a view of contemporary art that allowed for the simultaneous and equal validity of coexisting cultures, especially in India where strong, living traditions of folk and tribal societies coexisted with the urban modern.[10] He was responsible for the creation of the Roopankar Museum of Fine Arts in Bhopal, the capital of the state of Madhya Pradesh, and housed in the Bharat Bhavan complex that was specially constructed on a sloping plateau overlooking the Bhopal lake by contemporary architect Charles Correa. The natural contours of the site were used to fashion a series of terraced gardens and sunken courtyards, with individual buildings that display both urban modern art and contemporary folk and tribal art. To collect the latter, Swaminathan and some thirty students spent months in intense scouting in the remote areas of Madhya Pradesh; the museum was inaugurated in 1982.

Swaminathan's respect for the artistic creations of the folk and tribal peoples, which were originally produced to decorate the walls and floors of their mud huts (using simple local colors mixed with wax and oil), had a strong effect on his own work. His 1993 canvas *Text Decoded* incorporates forms, lines, and curves reminiscent of their work, but now created on the "high art" ground of canvas with oil paint from a tube mixed with wax. He worked with palette knife, rags, and roller, and used a sharp object to furrow deep into the thick paint surface. In addition, Swaminathan often applied paint with his hand, his essential "tool," just as the tribals did; he felt that his fingers could "discover and cover, reveal and mold" better than any conventional implement.[11] *Text Decoded* is one of a series of paintings he created to question the validity of the distinctions so often made between urban art and folk art and between art and craft. Swaminathan's aesthetic, which held that folk art, tribal art, and urban art are all equally valid versions of the contemporary, might appropriately be termed a "post-colonial aesthetic."[12]

Vidya Dehejia

GIFT OF MAHINDER AND
SHARAD TAK
ARTHUR M. SACKLER
GALLERY
10TH ANNIVERSARY



NOTES

The year given in brackets is the initial date of publication for essays anthologized in *Lalit Kala Contemporary* 40 (special issue on J. Swaminathan). See note 1.

1. J. Swaminathan, "The New Promise" [1967], in *Lalit Kala Contemporary* 40 (special issue on J. Swaminathan; anthology issued upon his death) (March 1995): 22.

2. J. Swaminathan, "Trends in Modern Indian Art, 1959: Neither Here nor There" [1959], p. 36.

3. J. Swaminathan, "The New Promise" [1967], p. 19.

4. J. Swaminathan, "Trends in Modern Art" [1961], p. 39.

5. Ibid., p. 40.

6. J. Swaminathan, "Art, Modern or Contemporary?" [1967], p. 15.

7. Gieve Patel, "An Interview with Swaminathan" [1967], p. 25.

8. J. Swaminathan, "Colour Geometry" [1967], p. 21.

9. J. Swaminathan, "The Cube and the Rectangle" [1967], p. 23.

10. J. Swaminathan, "The Cygan: An Auto-bio Note" [1993], p. 12.

11. Rupika Chawla, *Surface and Depth: Indian Artists at Work* (New Delhi: Viking, 1995), p. 144.

12. Ashok Vajpeyi, "Swaminathan" [1995], p. 64.

Southeast Asia

Prehistoric earthenware ceramics

late 3d–1st millennium B.C.
Thailand, possibly Ban Chiang tradition
S1998.119–.125

These earthenware pottery vessels, from a group of seven, represent two varieties of ceramics — differing in clay, form (and possibly forming technique), decoration, and firing — made in prehistoric mainland Southeast Asia, possibly on the Khorat plateau of northeast Thailand.

The dark gray beaker-shaped vessel (no. 1) was formed from two pieces: the rounded base of a container with broad trumpet mouth and wide, downturning rim rests within the throat of a separate pedestal with spreading foot, and a projecting flange conceals the seam. The uneven, undulating surfaces suggest that the vessel parts were formed by hand from slabs or coils of clay built up and then smoothed out between the potter's fingers.[1] Decoration — two broad, primarily curvilinear bands with angular lower edges — was first outlined with a sharp pointed tool, then filled in with a densely packed zigzag line sometimes described as "rocker stamping," suggesting that the blunt end of a blade was rocked back and forth to create the furrows. The untextured sections of the decorated surface, as well as the undecorated interior, appear to have been gently burnished. Presumably the vessel was fired in a bonfire, whose flames were smothered at the end of the firing with damp fuel or earth to produce the dense smoke that impregnated the walls with carbon, creating the charcoal gray surface.

The other vessel (no. 2) is also formed from two segments, but the two components are clearly distinguishable: a shallow, wide-mouthed, round-bottomed vessel with carinated body balances on the narrow top of a high pedestal with flaring base. The finished surface has been smoothed, although a paddle and anvil may have been employed to shape the rounded vessel bottom. Decoration centers on the shoulder of the vessel and the more visible lower half of the pedestal foot. Bands defined by straight, zigzag, or curvilinear lines are picked out with red pigment (probably an iron-bearing clay), which also coats the everted, downturned rim. The remaining surfaces were once coated with white pigment (probably white clay), which has largely worn off. Firing in a brightly blazing bonfire drew out the warm orange tones of the clay body and the red of the pigment.

1 Beaker-shaped vessel, Thailand, late 3d–early 2d millennium B.C., dark gray earthenware with incised and impressed decoration, height 33.5, diameter 43.0 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery — Purchase, S1998.119

The Khorat plateau of northeast Thailand is said to be the most intensively studied region of mainland Southeast Asia. Since archaeological research focusing specifically on prehistoric sites began there in the 1960s, the area's rich array of such sites dating from as early as the third millennium B.C. has provided data for consideration of basic questions regarding the emergence of permanent settlements, the cultivation of rice, and the development of bronze and iron metallurgy.[2]

Unquestionably the best known site is that of Ban Chiang, in Udon Thani Province. This site rocketed to world attention in the early 1970s, when controlled excavations of a prehistoric graveyard lying beneath the modern village of Ban Chiang yielded bronze ornaments and weapons as well as clay pots. Initial thermoluminescence dates from potsherds and radiocarbon dates from charcoal seemed to show that bronze had begun to be made there by about 4000 B.C., calling into question the primacy of bronze production in the

ancient Near East and China and leading to proclamations in the popular press that Ban Chiang was a "newly discovered cradle of civilization."[3] A branch of the national museum opened in Ban Chiang in 1987, and the site was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1992.

Ongoing research eventually revised the dates (the oldest bronze artifacts now appear to date to ca. 2000 B.C.), but not before a voracious market was created for prehistoric pots of any and all varieties.[4] Regardless of where the pots had been dug up (through clandestine processes), they were marketed as "Ban Chiang."[5]

Archaeologists, however, make a strict distinction between vessel forms actually found in the controlled excavations of the Ban Chiang site and those that can only be assumed to belong to a more widespread "Ban Chiang culture." That culture, however, was not the only one present on the Khorat plateau, where several cultures coexisted simultaneously and also replaced one another sequentially, and excavations show that the products of different pottery-making groups were traded across distances. No examples of the two pottery forms represented here have been excavated from Ban Chiang itself, although similar decorative systems are found.[6] Decorative systems, however, are portable and could easily have been adopted by potters working within diverse cultures. The accurate identification of the seven vessels in the Sackler Gallery awaits the results of additional scientific excavations as well as intensified analysis of prehistoric pottery production and distribution across mainland Southeast Asia.

Louise Cort

Pedestal-footed vessel. Thailand, first millennium B.C., orange earthenware with incised and slip-painted decoration, height 23.5, diameter 16.5 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery — Purchase, S1998.123

NOTES

1. Xeroradiography (revealing the internal structure of the walls) would probably show more exactly how the walls were formed, including whether the impressions left by use of a paddle and anvil for finishing the walls were obliterated by subsequent working. Traces of crosshatched paddle marks seem to remain around the inner edge of the foot.

2. Research on the Khorat plateau is summarized in Charles Higham, *The Archaeology of Mainland Southeast Asia* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 92–157.

3. Thermoluminescence (TL) determines the approximate date when a clay object was last subjected to high heat — presumably during firing at the time of manufacture. The early TL dates are given in Nikom Suthiragsa, "The Ban Chieng Culture," in *Early South East Asia*, ed. R. B. Smith and W. Watson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 51–52. The quoted phrase is mentioned in Chin You-di, *Ban Chiang Prehistoric Cultures* (Bangkok: Fine Arts Department, 1975).

4. For the revised dates, see Joyce C. White, "The Ban Chiang Chronology Revised," in *Southeast Asian Archaeology, 1986*, ed. Ian Glover and Emily Glover, BAR International Series 561 (Oxford: BAR, 1990), pp. 121–30.

5. Although the provenance of the Sackler vessels is not known, they were acquired following careful consultation with the Thai Department of Fine Arts and the Embassy of Thailand in Washington, D.C.

6. Joyce C. White, *Ban Chiang: Discovery of a Lost Bronze Age* (Philadelphia: University Museum, University of Pennsylvania and Smithsonian Institution, 1982), figs. 142 (dark gray beaker-shaped pot, National Museum of Thailand), 145 (pedestal-foot vessel, National Museum of Thailand). An Oxford University TL date for S1998.119 indicates that the dark gray vessel was last fired between 5000 and 3300 years ago, a dating that is consistent with that of similar pots excavated from the Ban Chiang site. (TL tests on two additional dark gray vessels showed them to be modern forgeries; they have been deposited in the Freer Gallery of Art Study Collection.)

Khmer glazed stoneware ceramics

1

2

Cambodia and Thailand
11th–12th centuries
S1996.107–.186

Together with brick and stone monuments and associated sculptures in stone and bronze, Khmer ceramics are the most important surviving legacy of the Khmer civilization. These two gifts of a jointly formed collection of eighty Khmer glazed stoneware ceramics make the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery a major repository of such material.[1]

GIFT OF OSBORNE [illegible]
GRATIA HAUGE
ARTHUR M. S[illegible]
GALLERY
10TH A[illegible]
S1996.107–.156

GIFT OF VICTOR AND
TAKANO HAUGE
ARTHUR M. SACKLER
GALLERY
[illegible]
S1996.157–.186

With its capital in the great city of Angkor from the ninth through early fifteenth century (and with earlier urban and ritual sites dating from the sixth century onward), the Khmer empire was the largest historical kingdom in mainland Southeast Asia, encompassing the area that is now Cambodia as well as much of modern Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam. The vast scale of Angkor exceeds that of any other urban center in South or Southeast Asia. Early trade with South Asia profoundly influenced patterns of Khmer life at all levels, bringing the Khmer into contact with Buddhism and the cults of Shiva and Vishnu and their related monumental architecture and sculpture, as well as with the ritual and courtly roles of the Brahman priesthood, all of which were adapted to local culture and transformed through contact with it. It has been argued that the Khmer also learned from India their hierarchical preference for gold, silver, bronze, and copper vessels over ceramics, and many Khmer ceramics reflect South Asian metal forms.[2] Nonetheless, commercial contact with China also left its traces, particularly in the Chinese ceramics (notably celadon-glazed Yue and Longquan wares and *gingbai* porcelains) that begin appearing at early Khmer sites, increase suddenly in the tenth century, and constitute greater and greater percentages of the ceramics finds in later sites. Chinese ceramic technology (presumably from south China) seems to underlie the production of glazed Khmer stoneware ceramics, although the nature and extent of such contacts are not yet understood.[3]

Like the high-temperature ceramics produced elsewhere in mainland Southeast Asia, Khmer glazed stoneware has received scant attention from scholars or collectors compared to the ceramics of East Asia. The majority of studies to date have focused on typology and chronology. The most insightful treatment of the subject is that of the French archaeologist Bernard Philippe

3

1 (far left) Covered container, possibly cinerary urn, probably Cambodia, Angkor, Khmer empire, Angkor period, 11–12th century, stoneware with green glaze, height 8.6, diameter 7.5 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, gift of Victor and Takako Hauge, S1996.165ab

2 Baluster jar with two-color glazing, probably Thailand, Buriram or Surin Province, Khmer empire, Angkor period, 11–12th century, stoneware with green and brown glazes, height 44.3, diameter 27.3 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, gift of Osborne and Gratia Hauge, S1996.112

3 Storage jar, probably Thailand, Buriram or Surin Province, Khmer empire, Angkor period, 12–13th century, stoneware with brown glaze, height 48.4, diameter 35.7 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, gift of Osborne and Gratia Hauge, S1996.115

Groslier (1926–1986), whose encounter with such Khmer ceramics in excavations rather than in the isolation of the connoisseur's world led him to consider them in their total role, both utilitarian and aesthetic, in Khmer culture, within the larger framework of their relationship to imported Chinese ceramics on the one hand and to domestic earthenware ceramics on the other, as well as to vessels made of other materials, including metal and basketry.[4] Archaeology has also played a central role in more recent research, which is gradually bringing into focus the dynamics of glazed ceramic production taking place simultaneously in many locations on the mainland, including northern and central Vietnam, north, central, and northeast Thailand, and Burma. The widespread distribution of the ceramics industry is only to be expected, given the basic roles for nonporous stoneware in food preparation and preservation and storage of grain, water, and other liquids, complementing the role of earthenware for cooking, steeping herbal medicine, and cooling water for drinking. Although Khmer stoneware seems to have been dedicated primarily to internal distribution, glazed ceramics served also as trade goods for the historical kingdoms based in Thailand and Vietnam. Above and beyond these utilitarian and economic roles, the glazed ceramics of Southeast Asia are accurate and distinctive reflections of local cultural styles.

Archaeological evidence shows that glazed stoneware was in production within the Khmer empire by the late ninth century, but basic questions concerning the source, development, and distribution of the technology remain unanswered.[5] Green-glazed ceramic sherds had been identified by French visitors to the hill called Phnom Kulen, east of Angkor, in the late nineteenth century; yet a kiln structure as such has not yet been found on the plateau, and recent circumstances have ruled out investigation. (Lids identical to that of the small urn [no. 1] have been found on Phnom Kulen.)[6] Thus an important stimulus to research on Khmer ceramics was the identification in northeast Thailand, around 1970, of kilns that had produced Khmer ceramics within the adjoining provinces of Buriram and Surin, on the border with modern Cambodia. Several kilns in the area, centering around the district town of Ban Kruat in Buriram, were excavated by the Thai Department of Fine Arts.[7] Groslier could testify that virtually no Ban Kruat wares were found in Angkor sites, however. Within the past few years, important discoveries of

kilns sites lying to the south of Phnom Kulen have given evidence for ceramic production in the immediate vicinity of Angkor, supporting Groslier's hypothesis that local kilns served every major Khmer settlement.[8] If that is indeed the case, more kiln sites will come to light.

This group of eighty ceramics offers abundant evidence of the distinctive features of Khmer glazed stoneware ceramics. Immediately apparent is their limited repertory of just two colors of glaze — green, ranging from pale yellow to olive, and brown, ranging from amber to nearly black, depending in each case on the percentage of iron and the firing conditions. These glazes appear to reflect basic Chinese glaze families. It is a Khmer trait, however, to combine the two glazes on a single vessel, especially for effective emphasis of the curving silhouette of baluster jars (no. 2). Related sherds from the Ban Kruat kilns reveal resourceful use of two clays in such vessels: dark clay constitutes the overall form and is masked only on the areas to be glazed green (the neck and pendant attachments around the shoulder in this case) with precious white clay, which shows the pale glaze to best advantage, while the dark clay underlying the brown glaze applied elsewhere enhances its deep color.

The baluster jar is a distinctive form in Khmer ceramics. It is closely related to the curvilinear profiles of Khmer architectural detailing, including railing and window balusters. The exaggerated swelling of the high shoulder is emphasized by the proportions of the narrow base and constricted neck, while the heavy, cantilevered rim is balanced by the pedestal foot. Bands of richly textured decoration are distributed over the entire vessel, with characteristic attention to the neck and base as well as the shoulder. The vessel form derives from the South Asian *purna kumbha* or "auspicious container," but only metal, stone, and earthenware versions are known in South Asia.

The large, high-shouldered storage jar (no. 3), another distinctive Khmer form, demonstrates how incised and impressed decor in the Khmer repertory makes up for the complete absence of underglaze painted decoration such as is found in contemporaneous wares of northern Vietnam or north-central Thailand. On this brown-glazed jar, tiers of horizontal grooves, incised while the jar rotated on the potter's wheel, mark the neck, shoulder, and foot, alternating with graceful arcs drawn freehand with a comb-like tool. The Khmer potter's ornamental vocabulary is borrowed from the metalsmith's or the jeweler's.

Khmer potters excelled in a repertory of animal-shaped vessels modeled in a range of sizes. Smaller ones, most often shaped as raptorlike birds (usually termed "owls"), but occasionally as frogs, cats, crabs, monkeys, or rabbits, were used to store moist lime, a key ingredient in betel, the refreshing stimulant consisting of arecanut shavings, lime, and flavorings wrapped in a fresh, heart-shaped betel leaf. The ceramic containers may reflect a vanished repertory of similar forms worked in silver alloy; indeed, Groslier termed the range of small, predominantly green-glazed Khmer ceramics "the 'silverware' of the poor."[9] Some larger vessels take the form of caparisoned elephants — in Khmer culture, one of the attributes of kingship and used customarily as mounts for travel and in battle. (The gateways of Angkor are said to have been gauged to the height of a fully loaded elephant.) Some of these larger vessels also contain lime traces, but an unusual elephant-shaped bottle in the Hauge gift (no. 4) has a short spout on the shoulder beneath the elephant's right cheek, suggesting that it was used for pouring water.

Finally, another distinctive and rare form in Khmer glazed ceramics is the anthropomorphic bottle (no. 5). On a

gourd-shaped bottle, a few applied bits of clay and deftly incised lines create a human face, breast, and hands folded in prayer. Groslier, who excavated one such bottle from the funerary site of Sras Srang at Angkor, suggested that such vessels may have been a regional form used chiefly in northeast Thailand.[10] As on this and most similar pieces, the damaged elongated neck of the Sras Srang example was sawn off at its base; a lid was attached to this piece in recent times.

The puzzle of the origin and use of anthropomorphic bottles is but one of numerous unsolved questions surrounding Khmer glazed ceramics. Their limited repertory of glazes and long-lived forms, spanning the ninth through fourteenth century if not longer, offer a rich body of material for understanding the aesthetic and technical realms of the historic Khmer. The Hauge gifts to the Sackler and Freer galleries create the potential for exceptionally rewarding study and exhibition.

Louise Cort

NOTES

1. Gift of Osborne and Gratia Hauge, s1996.107–56; gift of Victor and Takako Hauge, s1996.157–86. A simultaneous gift from Victor and Takako Hauge of ceramic sherds from the Ban Kruat kiln sites in southern Buriram Province, northeast Thailand, provides invaluable material for scientific analysis and research.

2. Bernard P. Groslier, "Introduction to the Ceramic Wares of Angkor," in *Khmer Ceramics: 9th–14th Centuries,* ed. Diana Stock (Singapore: Southeast Asian Ceramic Society, 1981), pp. 9–10. This important essay in the original French is published in its entirety as "Introduction à la Ceramique Angkorienne (fin IXe-debut XVe s)." *Peninsule,* n.s. 31 (1995): 5–59. The relationship of Khmer ceramics to South Asian metal vessels was the subject of John Guy's May 1997 lecture to the Oriental Ceramic Society, London, "A Reassessment of Khmer Ceramics and Their Origins," to be published in the *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society.*

3. For one view of possible relationships, see Roxanna M. Brown, "Guangdong: A Missing Link to Southeast Asia," in *Guangdong Ceramics from Butuan and Other Philippine Sites,* ed. Roxanna M. Brown (Manila: Oriental Ceramic Society of the Philippines, 1989), pp. 81–85.

4. Groslier, "Introduction to the Ceramic Wares of Angkor."

5. The oldest site to have yielded glazed Khmer stoneware to date is Roluos, the capital of Indravarnman (reigned 877–89), southeast of Angkor. Ibid., p. 18.

6. Roxanna M. Brown, *The Ceramics of South-East Asia: Their Dating and Identification,* 2d ed. (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 43.

7. Roxanna M. Brown, "Khmer Ceramics of the Korat Plateau: Unraveling the Mysteries," in *Khmer Ceramics,* pp. 41–49.

8. Groslier, "Introduction to the Ceramic Wares of Angkor," p. 17. An outline of the recent finds is presented in Ozaki Naoto, ed., *Tai, Kanbojia no toji* (Fukuoka: Fukuoka Art Museum, 1996), pp. 155–57.

9. Groslier, "Introduction to the Ceramic Wares of Angkor," p. 26.

10. Ibid., p. 29. The Sras Srang bottle is illustrated in Brown, *Ceramics of South-East Asia,* plate 28c.

Northern Vietnamese glazed stoneware ceramics

12th–14th centuries
F1998.10–.14

These five vessels were made at ceramics workshops in the Red River Delta of northern Vietnam, as shown by their fine-grained grayish white clay characteristic of the delta potteries as well as by their similarity to wares excavated from delta sites. The dates of these vessels span the twelfth through fourteenth centuries, corresponding to the Ly (1009–1225) and Tran (1225–1400) dynasties, when Vietnam became independent after nearly a millennium of Chinese rule, and Hanoi (known as Than Long) became the royal center of the kingdom. These ceramics represent the sensitive, subtle forms of wares bearing ivory or celadon-colored glazes that are viewed by many connoisseurs as the finest products of Vietnamese kilns.[1] Made prior to Vietnam's active engagement in international trade from the mid-fourteenth century onward, and the resultant distribution of Vietnamese ceramics to Turkey, Egypt, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Japan, these wares are said by some to embody indigenous taste more explicitly than the blue-and-white ceramics (closely modeled on Chinese porcelain) that were the mainstay of trade. Presumably the customers for these earlier ceramics were local rulers, nobles, and temple officials. While vessel shapes and glazes show an awareness of Chinese wares, especially celadon from the Longquan kilns, the wares also incorporate elements of form and decoration from South and Southeast Asian traditions, and the result is a body of work exhibiting a distinctive flavor of poise and refinement.

The wide-mouthed jar with four ornamented panels and a broad, flat base (no. 1) belongs to a group of wares formerly called "Thanh Hoa" because of the excavation of such pieces from tombs in that northern Vietnamese province in the 1920s and 1930s. Thanh Hoa ceramics (now known to be more widely distributed within northern Vietnam) bear decoration made by cutting into the soft clay through the freshly applied overall glaze, scraping away that glaze, and painting the motifs with iron glaze. The group includes many barrel-shaped, lidded jars of various heights with more elaborate decoration of flowers, birds, animals, or humans and some with attached, openwork pedestal bases. Rows of such jars were uncovered from Thanh Hoa tombs, perhaps put in place to hold offerings for the deceased. One jar now in the Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels, bears an ink inscription inside the lid reading "wine container."[2] The Freer jar is a smaller variant of the lidded containers, with simpler floral decoration, but its function—implied by the two holes neatly punched into the shoulder on the diagonal, as though for attaching something with a cord—is not known.[3] Its glazed rim suggests that it was not intended to have a lid. A horizontal bevel above the base creates the visual impression of a separate pedestal supporting the jar, echoing the more elaborate openwork bases attached to larger jars. The jar was placed on five clay wads for firing, a practice common to vessels of this type.[4] Its glaze has fired pale yellow-green and is coarsely crackled.

Strikingly elegant in its articulation is the form of the undecorated ivory-glazed bowl (no. 2). The slightly concave curve of the inward-turning rim subtly counterbalances a similar curve leading from the nearly flat, tapering wall to the narrow base. The base has a wide, flat foot rim with recessed center. The glaze in the bottom bears four small seed-shaped spur marks. Related pieces with incised decoration are dated thirteenth–fourteenth century.[5]

This group of early Vietnamese glazed ceramics, rarely found in Western collections, enriches the Freer Gallery of Art's

1

PURCHASE — FUNDS DONATED BY THE DOCENTS IN HONOR OF THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FREER GALLERY OF ART
F1998.10–.12

[illegible] — BETTY AND [illegible] RY [illegible] ART
F1998.13–.14

1 Wide-mouthed jar, Vietnam, Red River Delta region, Ly or Tran dynasty, 12th–14th century, stoneware with translucent greenish yellow and iron glazes, height 15.1, diameter 16.2 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, purchase — Funds donated by the Docents in honor of the 75th Anniversary of the Freer Gallery of Art, F1998.10

2 Bowl, Vietnam, Red River Delta region, Ly or Tran dynasty, 13th–14th century, stoneware with ivory glaze, height 10.4, diameter 15.1 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, purchase — Funds donated by Betty and John R. Menke, F1998.14

2

holdings of Southeast Asian ceramics and complements its later Vietnamese brown-and-white and blue-and-white wares from the export era.

Louise Cort

NOTES

1. John Guy, "Vietnamese Ceramics and Cultural Identity," in *Vietnamese Ceramics: A Separate Tradition*, ed. John Stevenson and John Guy (Chicago: Art Media Resources, 1997), pp. 11–21.

2. Stevenson and Guy, eds., *Vietnamese Ceramics*, no. 64.

3. An identical jar is in a private Japanese collection. Ozaki Naoto, ed., *Vietnamese Ceramics Exhibition* (Fukuoka: Fukuoka Art Museum, 1992), no. 12. Japanese connoisseurs have suggested the jar was used as an incense burner or charcoal brazier. Hiromu Honda and Noriki Shimazu, *Vietnamese and Chinese Ceramics Used in the Japanese Tea Ceremony* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1993), no. 7. Still another jar of this type, with the paired holes on the shoulder but aquatic motifs in the panels, was donated to the Musée Guimet as part of the collection gathered by the French archaeologist Henri Maspero in Vietnam between 1908 and 1919, mainly from the ancient site of Dai La west of Hanoi where Ly and Tran palaces were built. It is dated Tran dynasty, eleventh–twelfth century. Hélène Fromentin, "La céramique viétnamienne de la donation Maspero au musée national des Arts asiatiques-Guimet," *Arts Asiatiques* 52 (1997): 92, 103, fig. 8.

4. Compare Stevenson and Guy, eds., *Vietnamese Ceramics*, no. 65; Ozaki, ed., *Vietnamese Ceramics Exhibition*, nos. 12, 89 (base).

5. Stevenson and Guy, eds., *Vietnamese Ceramics*, nos. 126–28, 136–38.

China

Ax blade

China, coastal southeast, Liangzhu culture, Neolithic period, ca. 3000–2500 B.C.
Aluminous metamorphic rock
Height 11.7, length 14.6 cm
F1998.4

Stone ax blades were an indispensable part of Neolithic life. Used to clear forests, chop wood, hunt wildlife, and battle enemies, axes are one of the most common artifacts recovered from Neolithic contexts. This broad ax with a curved edge and straight butt represents one of these ancient implements. The large hole, drilled from both sides, was used to tie the blade to its wooden handle (fig. 1). The finely pitted stone has a distinctive metallic blue-gray color with buff patches. The mirrorlike finish, variegated hues, and near pristine condition of the blade contribute to its striking beauty.

Ax blades like this form one of three typical artifacts (the other two being the *bi*, or disk, and *cong*, or squared cylinder) recovered from Neolithic graves of the Liangzhu people, one of the oldest jade-working communities in ancient China, which flourished from circa 3500 to 2500 B.C. in the Yangzi Delta in modern Jiangsu and Zhejiang Provinces. Several richly furnished graves from the region have confirmed the special place of ax blades in Liangzhu burial customs. At Fuquanshan, Qingpu, just outside Shanghai, Tomb 6 contained nine stone and two jade (nephrite) axes, and Tomb 139 yielded twelve similar blades carefully laid along both sides of the

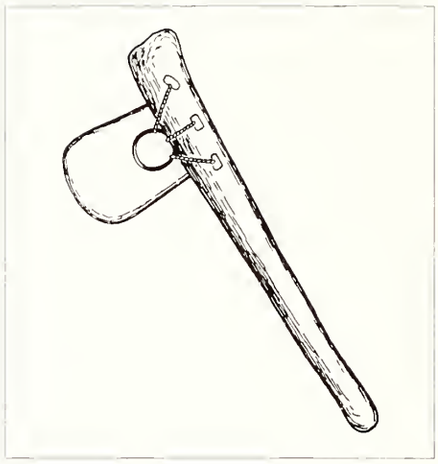


Fig. 1. Reconstruction showing hafting of a stone ax

buried body[1] (fig. 2). Tomb 20 at Fanshan, Yuhang, Zhejiang Province, contained a nephrite blade with fittings for its wooden handle, and twenty-four stone blades clustered near the feet of the occupant. At nearby Huiguanshan, Tomb 4 contained one nephrite and forty-eight stone axes, while Tomb 2 at Hengshan yielded the largest number yet found in a single grave — 132 stone blades but just one in nephrite. The nephrite ax was placed near the body's left hand, and the stone ones were piled near the feet.[2]

These burials reveal that axes had important symbolic meaning in the Liangzhu community, probably signifying the personal wealth and/or military status of select individuals. The different quantities and locations of stone and nephrite axes within the tomb suggest that the Liangzhu people distinguished between the more readily available, softer stones and the harder nephrite, which was more difficult to find. Their awareness of the various physical and aesthetic qualities of the materials allowed different symbolic values to be attached to them.

Analysis of this ax blade by x-ray diffraction indicates that it is not nephrite, the most commonly collected mineral in Western collections, but an aluminous metamorphic rock. It differs structurally and chemically from nephrite and is harder, ranging between 6.5 and 7.5 on Mohs' scale (with isolated patches perhaps reaching 8 or 9), compared to nephrite's 6 to 6.5. In the ongoing debate over the tools and techniques used to carve the intricate designs on the most elaborate Liangzhu jades, this ax suggests a new possibility: flintlike chips from a stone similar to this example may well have provided the requisite points hard enough to produce the superfine designs on the comparatively softer nephrite. Although many ax blades from Liangzhu sites display similar hues, structure, and high polish,[3] only one from Zhanglingshan, Wu Xian, Jiangsu Province, has been analyzed to reveal a similar chemical composition.[4] The Freer and Zhanglingshan axes are the first examples of this material to be identified. They will certainly not be the last.

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Fig. 2. Tomb 139 at Fuquanshan, Qingpu Xian, Shanghai, showing stone and jade ax blades in situ. After Mou Yongkang, *Liangzhu wenhua yüqi*, plate 5

COLLECTION OF EUGENE AND AGNES E. MEYER, GIFT OF ELIZABETH MEYER LORENTZ IN HONOR OF THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FREER GALLERY OF ART

NOTES

1. For Fuquanshan Tomb 6, see *Wenwu* 1984.2, pp. 1–2, fig. 2; for Tomb 139, see Mou Yongkang et al., *Liangzhu wenhua yüqi* (Hong Kong: Woods Publishing Co., 1989), plate 5; *Gems of Liangzhu Culture from the Shanghai Museum* (Hong Kong: Urban Council, 1992), p. 22, fig. 6.

2. For Fanshan Tomb 20, see *Wenwu* 1988.1, p. 7, fig. 9. For Hengshan Tomb 2, see Xu Huping et al., eds., *Dongfang wenming zi guang* (The Light of Oriental civilization: Collected essays in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the discovery of Liang Zhu culture) (Nanjing: Hainan International News Press, 1996), p. 69, fig. 2. Findings at Huiguanshan Tomb 4 have not been published; the excavation was discussed in *Kaogu* 1992.6, p. 530.

3. See, for example, *Art Treasures from the Nanjing Museum Collection* (Nagoya: Nagoya Municipal Museum, 1981), no. 5; Mou Yongkang, *Liangzhu wenhua yüqi*, plate 223. Other examples are not so well illustrated, although their high polish is often specially noted. See, for example, Huang Xuanpei in *Ritual and Power: Jades of Ancient China* (New York: China Institute in America, 1988), p. 10.

4. This ax is illustrated in Mou Yongkang, *Liangzhu wenhua yüqi*, plate 224; mineralogical analysis was conducted by Wen Guang and presented in Hao Minghua, "Liangzhu wenhua yüqi tanxi," *Dongfang wenming zi guang*, ed. Xu Huping et al., p. 426, tabulated item M1:7.

Ram

China, south-central, possibly Shijiahe culture, Hubei Province, Neolithic period, ca. 2200–2000 B.C.
Serpentine
Height 7.2, width 5.0, length 11.4 cm
F1998.81

Realistically rendered sculptures made in prehistoric China are rare. Those that occur often appear as sculptural accents on vessels, mostly in earthenware, and almost never in stone.[1] Some of the earliest jade or stone sculptures are generally dated to the Bronze Age period (ca. 1600–1300 B.C.), and as recently as 1995, an exhaustive study of Chinese jades stated that among jade animal-shaped carvings "there are only a few Neolithic precedents."[2] It is therefore particularly remarkable that the present sculpture of a standing ram can be so closely linked with a Chinese Neolithic context.

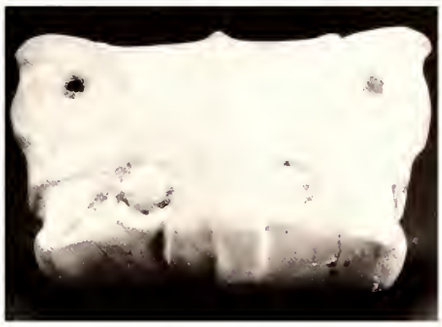
This small ram is sculpted naturalistically and with charming simplicity. It stands on short, stumpy legs, with rump slightly set back. Both fore and hind haunches are molded as smooth undulating planes, and the head and neck are modeled with similar subtlety. The ram's distinguishing feature, the scored curled horns, stand out clearly from its head. No eyes are visible. A faint, straight incision suggests the mouth. Two shallow round depressions, serving no apparent descriptive function, appear inside the loop described by the horns. The stone is a speckled light and dark gray serpentine (Mohs' hardness of 5).

A group of earthen animal sculptures (fig. 1) recovered from a late third and early second millennium B.C. context, called the Shijiahe culture, centered in Tianmen Xian, Hubei Province, provides striking comparison with this ram.[3] The earthen animals and the serpentine ram share a lively simplicity in modeling marked by the distinctive, rump-heavy stance. The Shijiahe finds also included small jade carvings of birds, cicadas, and animal heads that exhibit modeling techniques similar to those on the ram (fig. 2) — in particular, the low ridge down the center of the face and, above all, the peculiar feature of small depressions on the head that do not represent any anatomical function. These similarities provide compelling evidence for placing this small ram within the same context as the earthen and jade sculptures of the Shijiahe culture in south-central China. The ram's purported provenance further reinforces this association. It came from the collection of A. W. Bahr, noted British collector of ancient Chinese jades, who acquired it from his brother who lived and collected Chinese antiquities in south China during the 1920s.

Comparing the Freer ram with stone or jade sculptures from the Yellow River basin in north China confirms the artistic differences between the two regions, already

recognized in Bronze Age artifacts.[4] In this regard the most important find is the group of jade animal sculptures recovered from the late-thirteenth-century B.C. tomb of a Shang dynasty (ca. 1600–1050 B.C.) consort, Fu Hao, opened in Anyang, northern Henan Province. Fu Hao's jade animals often appear angular and stiff, their bodies covered by elaborate abstract patterns.[5] Similarly blocky sculptures with undecorated bodies are also known, though not from excavated contexts.[6] One of these, a small jade bear in the Winthrop collection, Harvard University, shares two distinctive features of Shijiahe jades — the central ridge down the face and the enigmatic small depressions (see fig. 3). On the bear, however, the depressions serve as eyes, and the mouth, merely suggested on the ram, is a clear-cut incision. Given an early Shang date on stylistic grounds, the Winthrop jade bear hints at early contacts between the people of the Yellow and Yangzi basins of north and south-central China. This contact and the native tradition of realistic sculpture in the south were to continue to inspire some of the most unusual naturalistic forms found among China's Bronze Age artifacts.

Only a small handful of realistically modeled sculptures in Western collections have been considered as possibly pre-Bronze Age in date — examples are found in the Avery Brundage collection, Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, and in the Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas City.[7] Their Neolithic claims are tentative at best, lacking the benefit of a convincing link with archaeologically documented material. The Freer ram therefore enjoys the singular distinction of possibly being one of the few surviving examples of late Neolithic sculptures in stone.[8] As the only realistic Neolithic sculpture among Freer's collection of geometric jades, this ram is a key representative of a little-known but important facet of the art of Neolithic China.



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NOTES

1. Yang Xiaoneng, *Sculpture of Prehistoric China* (Hong Kong: Tai Dao Publishing Ltd., 1988).

2. Jessica Rawson, *Chinese Jade from the Neolithic to the Qing* (London: British Museum Press, 1995), p. 205.

3. The first excavations were made in 1955 (*Kaogu tongxun* 1956.3, pp. 11–21), but the earthen sculptures were not properly published until recently. See *Connoisseur* (Spring 1996): 14–33; also Jessica Rawson, ed., *Mysteries of Ancient China* (London: British Museum Press, 1996), no. 12. The late-Neolithic date of the Shijiahe finds was only recognized after additional excavations made during the 1980s (*Jianghan kaogu* 1992.1, pp. 56–60). A few more earthen sculptures, mostly fragmentary, have been recovered from other Neolithic contexts in south-central China. Yang Xiaoneng, *Sculpture of Prehistoric China*, p. 24, fig. 22, plate 130. These range in date from ca. 5000 to 3000 B.C.

4. Discussed in Robert W. Bagley, *Shang Ritual Bronzes from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 13–64.

5. The animal sculptures in this tomb are discussed in detail in Rawson, *Chinese Jade from the Neolithic to the Qing*, pp. 205–208. See also *Yinxu yüqi* (Jades from Yinxu) (Beijing: Wenwu Press, 1982).

6. For examples, see *Chinese Jade Animals* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Museum of Art, 1996), nos. 8–9.

7. See René-Yvon Lefebvre-d'Argencé, *Chinese Jades in the Avery Brundage Collection* (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 1977), plate 1; Alfred Salmony, *Carved Jade of Ancient China* (Berkeley: Gillick Press, 1938), plate 1: 1–2. More examples, some likely to date from the Shang period, are discussed in Alfred Salmony, *Chinese Jade Through the Wei Dynasty* (New York: Ronald Press, 1963), plates 1–11.

8. A close mate to the Freer ram (front legs missing) was published in 1963 as part of the Stephen Junkunc III collection, Chicago. Salmony, *Chinese Jade Through the Wei Dynasty*, plate 11: 5. Its current whereabouts are unknown.

Ornamental front of scabbard

China, northwest, late 11th–early 10th century B.C.
Bronze
Width 10.2 cm, length 19.3
F1998.6

Daggers and short swords are perfect weapons for the mobile life of hunters and herders. They can be kept close at hand, hung from a belt, for hunting and for personal defense against wild animals or hostile foes. Favored among pastoral peoples across ancient Eurasia, such weapons were rare in contemporaneous Chinese contexts. Simple scabbards made of leather or wood protect the blades when not in use, but ones decorated on their faces with sewn-on appliqués made of an expensive material such as bronze, as this example, may symbolize the owner's status or the weapon's ceremonial function. Most ornamented scabbards from Bronze Age China accompanied distinctly non-Chinese weapons and implements, indicating that they may have entered China through contact with foreign peoples.[1]

This ornament for the front of a scabbard is distinguished by flowing, interlacing ribbons that terminate in budlike forms on the upper half of its U-shaped frame. Pairs of small holes along the frame's edge would have allowed the ornament to be attached to its leather or wooden sheath. When the scabbard ornament was first published in 1970, nothing comparable was known, and it was given a conservatively late date in the Bronze Age.[2] Since then, excavations in north China have supplied both a geographical and a chronological context. A total of six closely similar scabbard ornaments have been excavated from late-eleventh- to early-tenth-century B.C. burials in northwest and northeast China (figs. 1, 2). Four of these ornaments, from Baicaopo, Lingtai Xian, Gansu Province, were found with ritual bronze vessels that belonged to ministers of the Zhou court in western China. Two more were excavated at Liulihe, Fangshan, south of Beijing, located on the eastern edge of Zhou domain. The tombs also contained inscribed bronzes associated with the marquis of Yan, a feudatory of the Zhou king.[3] Both burials are located on the fringes of the Zhou realm, which is still populated by an ethnic and cultural mix of Chinese and non-Chinese origins.

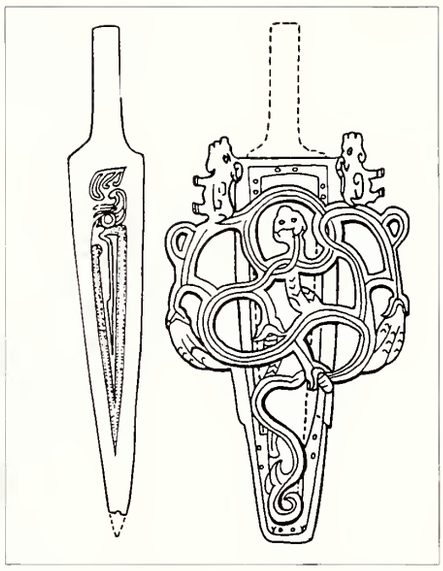

Fig. 1. Drawing of bronze scabbard ornament with short sword from Tomb 2 at Baicaopo, Lingtai Xian, Gansu Province, length of scabbard ornament, 18 cm. After Cheng Dong and Zhang Shaoyi, *Ancient Chinese Weapons* (Beijing: People's Liberation Army Publishing House, 1990), p. 58, fig. 3.44

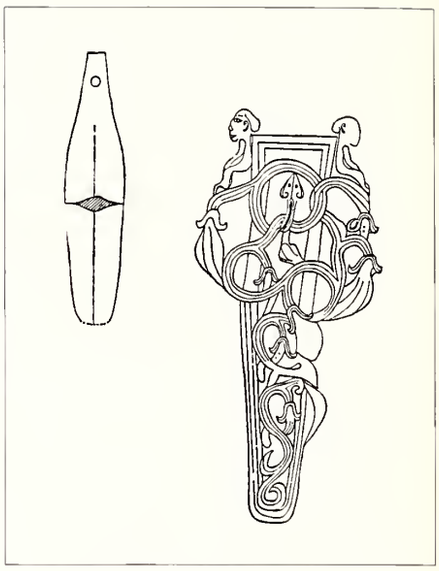

Fig. 2. Drawing of bronze scabbard ornament with short sword from Tomb 253 at Liulihe, Fangshan, Beijing, length of scabbard ornament 22.8 cm. After *Liulihe Xi Zhou Yan guo mudi* (Beijing: Wenwu Press, 1995), p. 202, figs. 118.1, 118.3

An extraordinary decorative element on this scabbard ornament — two kneeling human figures whose profile heads rise prominently above the top of the ornament — points further to its ties with ancient foreigners on China's borders. Each head shows distinctly non-Chinese features, such as a large, almond-shaped eye, broad nose, thick lips, and wavy hair gathered into a bun at the back. Of the six excavated examples discussed above, only one (that from Liulihe) displays similar human figures at the top. Their facial features are obscured by heavy incrustation, but their hairstyles are clearly similar (fig. 2). Representations of human figures in any context were extremely rare in ancient China. The strikingly non-Chinese figures on scabbard ornaments not only add to early China's meager store of human images, but they also rank among the earliest portraits of foreigners who were at China's doorsteps by the end of the second millennium B.C.

Fig. 3. Ornamental front of scabbard, China, northwest, 10th century B.C., bronze, length 21.3 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, gift of Charles Lang Freer, F16.393

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This scabbard ornament and its excavated counterparts from northwest and northeast China are the earliest surviving objects of their kind known to date. Later examples, excavated from tombs in Rujiazhuang, Baoji Xian, Shaanxi Province, dating to the tenth and ninth centuries B.C., accompany similar daggers and display the same shape, but they carry simpler designs.[4] Related to this latter group is a second scabbard ornament in the Freer Gallery of Art, which is distinguished by its design of a spider over its web, an eccentric motif with no counterpart in conventional Chinese bronze designs (fig. 3). Even though scabbards with an ornamented front appeared on the northern edge of China at the beginning of the first millennium B.C., they never quite penetrated China's mainstream tradition of bronze production. This custom of using daggers and scabbards continued to be favored by peripheral peoples, who, by the third and second centuries B.C., seemed to have converged in southwest China, around modern Sichuan and Yunnan Provinces.[5]

Jenny F. So

PUBLISHED

Selections from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd (New York: Asia Society, 1970), no. 31; Jenny F. So and Emma C. Bunker, *Traders and Raiders on China's Northern Frontier* (Washington, D.C., and Seattle: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and University of Washington Press, 1995), no. 41; Jenny F. So, "Bronze Weapons, Harness and Personal Ornaments: Signs of Qin's Contact with the Northwest," *Orientations* (November 1995): 36–43, fig. 1.

NOTES

1. Discussions of the non-Chinese origins of knives, daggers, and ornamented scabbards are found in Max Loehr, *Chinese Bronze Age Weapons* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1956), chap. 4; Lin Yün, "A Reexamination of the Relationship Between Bronzes of the Shang Culture and of the Northern Zone," in *Studies of Shang Archaeology*, ed. K. C. Chang (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 237–73; Jenny F. So and Emma C. Bunker, *Traders and Raiders on China's Northern Frontier* (Washington, D.C., and Seattle: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and University of Washington Press, 1995), pp. 33–38, nos. 14–16.

2. See *Selections from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd* (New York: Asia Society, 1970), no. 31. An unpublished example, inaccurately identified as a harness fitting, is in the Avery Brundage collection of the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (B60 B703). The scabbard ornament illustrated in figure 3 was also unpublished at the time of the Asia Society catalogue.

3. The excavated examples are also discussed in So and Bunker, *Traders and Raiders*, p. 124. Only four of the six are complete (with minor restorations). The two from Liulihe are in the Capital Museum in Beijing; see *Liulihe Xi Zhou Yan guo mudi* (Yan State cemetery from the Western Zhou period at Liulihe)(Beijing: Wenwu Press, 1995), color plate 46, plate 70:1–3. Two intact examples from Baicaopo are divided between the Gansu Provincial Museum in Lanzhou, Gansu Province, and the National Museum of Chinese History in Beijing. The last two from Baicaopo, in fragmentary condition, remain in the Gansu Provincial Museum.

4. See Jenny F. So, "Bronze Weapons, Harness and Personal Ornaments," *Orientations* (November 1995): 37–38, fig. 2.

5. See Tong Enzheng, "Wuo guo xi'nan diqu qingtongjian de yanjiu" (Bronze daggers from Southwest China), *Kaogu xuebao* 1977.2, p. 37, fig. 3; p. 43, fig. 8, for examples dating from the third to the first century B.C.

Drum

China, southwest, Six Dynasties,
3d–6th century A.D.
Bronze
Height 71, diameter 120 cm
F1994.25ab

This massive drum is typical of bronze drums used by mountain tribes that lived in the Guangxi Zhuangzu Autonomous Region, in the area bounded in the north by the Xi River, in the west by Yunnan Province, and in the southwest by northern Vietnam.[1] The only example of its type in the collection of the Freer Gallery of Art, it shows a softly undulating silhouette, a flat top that extends well beyond the edge of the walls, and around its perimeter a parade of six sets of frogs — each consisting of a small frog on the back of a larger one. The small bird near the bottom on one side of the wall, in line with one pair of large double loops, is a rare feature.[2] Repeated narrow rows of woven mat, coin, and abstracted bird designs encircle the walls and the flat top marked by a multirayed sun motif in the center. Both the sun (nature's light and life-giving force) and frog (whose croaking often announces pending rain) have profound meanings for peoples heavily dependent on agriculture for their livelihood.

Most of the monumental drums like this one have been recovered in southwest Chinese contexts from the Six Dynasties to early Tang periods (third to seventh century). More precise dating of these drums is difficult because few have been found in secure archaeological contexts, and their inherently conservative designs offer few clues for effective stylistic analysis.[3]

Most striking, however, is the drum's immense size. Today, less than ten surviving drums measure 120 centimeters or larger in diameter: the largest, from Guangxi, is 165 centimeters across the top, and an unprovenanced example in the Shanghai Museum is a close second at 145 centimeters.[4] Although bronze drums are amply represented in public and private collections in China and the West, most measure under 100 centimeters in diameter, with the majority about 50 centimeters. Smaller drums (about 50 centimeters or smaller) would have been struck, hung sideways by the double loops from a rack. Large drums like the present example could not have been easily hung; they were most likely stood upright and struck like modern kettledrums.

Bronze drums were the ritual object par excellence in southwest China and neighboring Southeast Asia. Their production and use began in the late first millennium B.C. in southwest China and continued into the present in mainland Southeast Asia and Indonesia. Over the centuries, they functioned in multiple capacities as symbols of power in both peace and war. Detailed sculptural representations on second- and first-century B.C. bronze drums from Yunnan Province show large drums displayed at a festive gathering, perhaps one drum representing one tribe, while smaller drums were hung and played as musical instruments.[5] The size of the drum might have been a measure of its owner's status. As status symbols, drums were probably presented as rewards to deserving warriors or as tribute or political tokens of good faith between tribes, and they were often sounded to gather troops and tribes for battle.[6]

The presence of numerous large square spacers on the top and walls, and mold seams dividing the drum into two halves, indicate that a traditionally Chinese piece-mold assembly technique was used for its production. Casting of monumental drums like this one, with thin walls and tops only 4 to 6 millimeters thick, was no mean task for the bronze caster of the time. Two technical features suggest that the makers of these drums developed techniques for dealing with these difficulties. The relatively high lead content in the copper-tin-lead alloy brings increased viscosity and easier flow of the molten metal in the pouring process, resulting in finer cast details and fewer flaws. The unusually wide seams marked by a thickened overflow of metal visible up and down both sides of the drum wall suggest that the molten bronze was poured along a narrow gate left by the two mold sections. This arrangement allowed quick and even flow of the molten metal into the mold, vital for the success of thin-walled, large castings like this drum.[7]

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NOTES

1. For a range of similar examples excavated and recovered from the Guangxi Zhuangzu Autonomous Region, see *Zhongguo gudai tonggu* (Beijing: Wenwu Press, 1988), plates 104–14.

2. One or two small birds are found on only a few of the examples illustrated. Ibid., plates 113:2, 114:3, 5, 6.

3. Dates offered have been based on the use of various coin patterns, the discovery of seventh-century Tang coins or Six Dynasties glazed pottery with some drums, and comparison with local stamped pottery designs. Problems surrounding their dating using the above criteria are discussed in *Zhongguo gudai tonggu*, pp. 117–21. For a similar drum excavated from Guangxi Lingshan and assigned to the Tang period, see *Guangxi chutu wenwu* (Excavated relics from Guangxi) (Beijing: Wenwu Press, 1978), no. 168.

4. See Hong Sheng, "Guangxi gudai tonggu yanjiu," *Kaogu xuebao* (Study of ancient bronze drums from Guangxi) 1974. 1, plate 1, drawing on p. 49, fig. 2:1, for the largest example; Wen You, *Gu tonggu tulu* (An illustrated compendium of ancient bronze drums) (Beijing: Zhongguo gudian yishu Press, 1957), no. 1, for the Shanghai Museum example. The Shanghai drum was salvaged from a foundry heap. Of the nearly three hundred drums recorded in Guangxi, only five measure 120 centimeters or larger in diameter. See Hong Sheng, "Guangxi gudai tonggu yanjiu," pp. 76–89.

5. See details of scenes on top of bronze drums from Yunnan Province in *Yunnan Jin'ning Shihzhaishan gumuqun fajue baogao* (Excavation report for the ancient burials at Shihzhaishan, Jin'ning, Yunnan Province) (Beijing: Wenwu Press, 1959), plates 52–55; *Zhongguo gudai tonggu*, pp.144–45, figs. 76–77.

6. For a discussion of drums as power symbols, see *Zhongguo gudai tonggu*, pp. 138–43; also Helmut Loofs-Wissowa, "Dongson Drums: Instruments of Shamanism or Regalia?" *Arts Asiatiques* 46 (1991): 39–49.

7. Metallographic analysis of similar drums and the likely method of mold assembly and pouring technique are discussed in *Zhongguo gudai tonggu*, pp. 182–92, 213–20.

Lion fitting

China, Tang dynasty, 7th century
Bronze with traces of gilding
Length 13.2 cm
S1997.31

Lions are not native to China. Since ancient times they roamed India, Iran, and Mesopotamia.[1] The opening of the Silk Route in the first centuries A.D. brought Central Asian peoples to the Chinese court, often laden with exotic tribute that included lions. Chinese emperors looked upon these magnificent beasts with awe. In 635 foreign emissaries presented a lion to the Tang dynasty (618–907) emperor Taizong (reigned 627–49). A passage from the poem composed by the court poet in its honor expresses the Tang court's wonder for this creature:

It glares its eyes — and lightning flashes,
It vents its voice — and thunder echoes.
It drags away the tiger, swallows down the bear,
Splits the rhinoceros, cleaves the elephant.[2]

As the lion was the king of beasts, its power was synonymous with the emperor's. Lions lined the approach to the mausoleum of the fifth Tang emperor (died 712) at Qiaoling outside Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, not simply as ferocious guardian figures but also as majestic symbols of power and the huge extent of the Tang empire. The lion hunt, a popular sport of Persian kings often depicted on Sasanian silver, became a symbol of the ruler's power over all living creatures.[3] The Tang ruling elite embraced this royal pastime and hunted avidly — not lions, for as exotic tributes from faraway lands, they would be too precious to kill. Tang tomb furnishings in the capital area around Xi'an provide vivid images of this aristocratic obsession: the wall paintings from the tomb of Prince Zhanghuai (died 711) showing a hunting expedition with trained hunting hounds and leopards, or a ceramic tomb sculpture of a foreigner and his unruly panther aide from the tomb of Princess Yongtai (buried in 706).[4]

This small sculpture of a lion in flying leap is a masterful example of realistic depiction. The animal seems to be caught in midflight — its furry mane, thick tail, and hind legs are swept back by the wind in its face. Its rippling muscles and tensed front paws express an awesome power and dynamism. It is therefore noteworthy that the lion should be given a pointed, dragon-like muzzle, a feature suggesting that its maker was not too familiar with real lions but had to rely on conventional portrayals of another equally awesome, but imaginary, creature — the dragon.[5] Fine incised lines delineate fur, and the entire body was once gilded. Its left front leg is a restoration.

The rectangular slot on the animal's hollow chest suggests that it was once attached to a larger object. Only a few other similar leaping lions are known, but none retains any clue to their original use or context. One example, in the collection of the Yamato Bunkakan, Nara, shows rectangular tabs extending from the animal's paws, further indicating that these animals were ornamental supports or fittings.[6] Throughout the Sui-Tang periods (sixth to eighth century), lions figured prominently in both Buddhist and secular art. In Buddhist contexts, the bodhisattva of Wisdom (Mañjuśrī) rides a lion. The lotus throne of the Buddha, the "lion among men," is often flanked by lions sitting in quiet attendance. In secular contexts, lions appear more animated, frolicking among vines on the backs of bronze mirrors and licking their paws in glazed ceramics.[7] The lively, playful character of the Sackler lion suggests it probably functioned in similar secular contexts.

Jenny F. So

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1. See Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of T'ang Exotics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963), pp. 84–87.

2. Quoted in ibid., p. 85.

3. See Sasanian gilt silver plates in the collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA 62.150) or the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery collection (S1987.143). These and many more examples are illustrated in Bo Gyllensvärd, "T'ang Gold and Silver," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, no. 29 (1957): fig. 65:h–k.

4. For the tomb paintings, see *Zhongguo meishu chuanji, Hui hua bian 12* (Beijing: Wenwu Press, 1989), no. 114; for the pottery figure, see *Zhongguo meishu chuanji, diaosu bian 4* (Beijing: Wenwu Press, 1988), no. 119.

5. For example, see the gilt bronze dragon in the Grenville L. Winthrop collection, Sackler Museum, Harvard University (1943.53.113).

6. *Yamato Bunkakan shozhin zuhan mokuroku* (Asian art collection of the Museum Yamato Bunkakan), vol. 5 (Nara: Yamato Bunkakan, 1978), p. 69, no. 105. For other examples, see Clarence W. Kelley, *Tang Dynasty Chinese Gold and Silver in American Collections* (Dayton: Dayton Art Institute, 1984), no. 68; Viktor Griessmaier, *Sammlung Baron Eduard Von der Heydt, Wien* (Baron Eduard von der Heydt Collection, Vienna) (Vienna: Krystall-Verlag, 1936), no. 154.

7. For typical examples, see Tang mirrors (F44.5, F54.22) and three-color glazed ceramic lion (F29.15) in the collection of the Freer Gallery of Art.

Head of a Buddha

China, probably Longmen, Luoyang,
Henan Province, Tang dynasty, ca. 700
Limestone
Height 76.2 cm
S1997.26

The style of this powerfully carved head of a Buddha and the physical appearance of the limestone suggest it was created for the majestic Longmen cave-temple complex, near Luoyang, in Henan Province.[1] Buddhism reached China from India by the first century A.D., and by the fifth century, the Indian concept of cave temples as devotional and pilgrimage centers had become popular. Beginning in the late fifth century, the imperial household began to support Buddhist sculpture at Longmen. The court's patronage continued for almost another four hundred years, ensuring a sculptural program of monumental grandeur. When this stone head was carved sometime around the year 700, Buddhism as an organized religion in China had reached a powerful peak as a force in political and cultural life.

The solemn majesty of this sculptural fragment reflects the maturity of Tang dynasty (618–907) Buddhist art. Waves of influence from India and Central Asia had been absorbed and transcended to achieve a new aesthetic that featured a complex interplay between foreign-derived interests in plastic modeling and realism juxtaposed with the Chinese preference for linear expression. Here the sculptor imbued the Buddha with a naturalistically modeled, fleshy face offset by linear patterns seen in the sweeping arches of the high brows, the schematized, flat ridges of the ear cartilage, and the decorative rows of "snail-shell curls" for the hair. Typical of the best Tang sculpture, this massive head is at once worldly, and yet the expression, with downcast eyes and pouting mouth, suggests transcendental spirituality. Without knowledge of the original liturgical context for this sculpture, it is impossible to determine which Buddha in the Mahayana pantheon is represented. Mahayana Buddhism (literally, the Greater Vehicle) is a school of religious thought that promotes universal salvation and embraces the concept of a multiplicity of Buddhas, including a Buddha of the Past, Present, and Future. Other Buddhas commonly represented in Tang art include those who reside in the paradises associated with the cardinal directions, especially the Buddha of the Western Paradise, as well as the Buddha of Healing. Another key aspect of Mahayana Buddhism is the belief that compassionate, enlightened beings known as bodhisattvas, attendants to a Buddha, will aid the faithful.

The head would have crowned a seated or standing Buddha that probably would have been positioned at the center of a triad or pentad, with figures of monks or bodhisattvas on the flanks. Judging from the damage at the back of the head, the original sculpture was probably carved from living rock and rounded on three sides. Early in the twentieth century, during a period of political tumult and economic depression in China, vandalism at cave temples was rampant, and large pieces of sculpture were removed — sometimes literally ripped out — of the walls for sale. Given these rough circumstances, this head is in good condition, but there is evidence of minor restorations in the area of the hair and around the nose. One ear is missing, and the other is damaged.

Close comparisons to this head can be found in several caves at Longmen, including one called Leigu Cave. Sculptures now outside of China, including a Buddha head in the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, and one previously exhibited in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, also share stylistic affinities.[2] The addition of a sculpture of this magnitude greatly enhances the collection of Chinese Buddhist art at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, which also houses a notable sixth-century "Thousand Buddha" stele. Another important Buddhist object of about the same date as the Longmen-style head is a richly decorated, gilt-metal incense burner made for a Buddhist altar.[3] In spite of the obvious differences in material and size, the metal censer and stone Buddha head considered together reflect common circumstances. The patrons spared nothing: lavish materials, meticulous craftsmanship, and majesty in design and scale mark the cultural brilliance of Buddhism's florescence in the seventh and eighth century.

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Osvald Sirén, *Chinese Sculpture* (London, 1925; reprint, New York: Hacker Art Books, 1970), vol. 4, plate 466c.

NOTES

1. Osvald Sirén was the first to postulate that this sculpture originally belonged at Longmen, but it should be remembered that workshops in other areas of north China also followed the "Longmen-style," thus making it impossible to prove that this head is from Longmen. See *Chinese Sculpture* (London, 1925; reprint, New York: Hacker Art Books, 1970), vol. 4, plate 466c.

2. For comparative material, see René-Yvon Lefebvre d'Argence, ed., *Chinese, Korean, and Japanese Sculpture* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1974), p. 220, no. 109; Robert L. Thorp and Virginia Bower, *Spirit and Ritual: The Morse Collection of Ancient Chinese Art* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1982), p. 89, no. 57; Longmen Caves Research Institute, *Longmen Liusan Diaoxiang Ji* (Assembled examples of statues removed from the Longmen Caves) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu chubanshe, 1993).

3. The objects in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery are: stele, S1991.57, and censer, S1987.5.

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Pair of tomb-guardian creatures (*zhenmushou*)

China, Henan or Shaanxi Province,
Tang dynasty, ca. 700–740
Gray earthenware with lead silicate glazes and mineral pigments over white slip
S1997.24: height 98.0, width 32.6, depth 31.5 cm
S1997.25: height 95.7, width 35.7, depth 31.5 cm

With horns and bristling hair surrounding snarling faces, flaming wings springing from muscular shoulders, and bodies patterned boldly in polychrome (*sancai*) glazes, this pair of mythical guardian figures displays an alert aggressiveness key to its role among the ceramic figures populating the underground tomb of a high-ranking personage of the Tang dynasty (618–907). The fearsome pair once stood watch in the passageway leading to the main burial chamber. The creatures were fabricated as part of a retinue of large-scale ceramic figures that also included a pair each of Buddhist guardian kings (*lokopalas*) and civil officials, all glazed and decorated in related color schemes and standing on identical rocky pedestals.[1] Such sets, sculpted in roughly one-half life size, constituted the dominant figures among the extensive repertories of tomb ceramics produced from the late seventh through mid-eighth century, when the aesthetic and social concept of the Tang dynasty tomb attained its full development. Smaller-scale horses and camels, grooms, dancers, riders, attendants, farm animals, jars, and tableware were placed in chambers opening off the passageway. Painted pictorial murals and scenes engraved on stone doors and coffins also contributed to the creation of a palatial environment within the tomb, which, once furnished, was sealed permanently. Above ground, a natural hill or artificial mound approached by a "spirit road" marked the tomb's location. Surface structures were the site of worship conducted by descendants of the deceased in the belief that the spirit of the tomb's inhabitant played an active role in their lives.[2]

Subterranean tomb structures developed in China by the Shang period (ca. 1600–ca. 1050 B.C.), reflecting the development of the practice of ancestor worship. Sets of wooden or clay guardian figures are known from tombs of much earlier as well as much later date, but the imposing scale, dramatic postures, and brilliantly colored polychrome glazes of the eighth-century ceramic pieces have captured the imagination of Western collectors since they first appeared on the market early in this century. Only the discovery of the life-sized terra-cotta "warrior army" from the third century B.C. tomb of the emperor Qin Shi Huangdi in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, called public attention to the tomb furnishings of other eras. Like the figures made for Qin Shi Huangdi's tomb, earlier ceramic figures (usually small) are unglazed or use only monochrome glaze, while later figures, although brightly glazed, are also typically much smaller in scale. The tomb figures of the eighth century represent the apogee of this specialized sculptural form. Their production for the tombs of the elite was made possible by the wealth that flowed into the expanded imperial territory of Tang China from international trade and commerce, making the capital city of Chang'an (now Xi'an) the largest metropolis in the world.

The evolution of tomb figure sets in general reflects the changing religious context of burial in China, which from the Han period (206 B.C.–A.D. 220) onward incorporated Buddhist beliefs (as represented by the guardian kings) alongside more ancient Chinese notions of death. The pair of hybrid tomb-guardian creatures (*zhenmushou*) represented by these two sculptures embodies various earlier concepts of earth spirits associated with the dead. Eventually these largely dangerous spirits were transformed into protective figures whose fearsomeness frightened off ghosts. In keeping with their conceptual evolution, the sculpted images of the creatures grew from small, unadorned figures to large-scale, colorful and elaborately articulated beasts seen here.[3]

These spirits sit on their haunches atop rocky pedestals. They are composite forms, borrowing elements from both real and fantastic animals as well as from humans. Spiked wings and flamelike tufts of hair project from the shoulders of both creatures; otherwise, they vary in most details. One of the pair of creatures (no. 1–S1997.24) is human-faced, with pop eyes, mustache and goatee, and blunt teeth bared by his open mouth,[4] but a single horn sprouts from his forehead below twisting columns of hair, and his trunklike nose and large, flaring ears are features of an elephant. His feet are hoofed. The other figure (no. 2–S1997.25) has a fierce leonine face with bared fangs, two pairs of horns, a mane radiating in flamelike tendrils, and clawed feet.

Both figures are ornamented with the polychrome lead silicate glazes that distinguish tomb figures of the first half of the eighth century. The lionlike figure is covered almost completely with clear, amber, or green glazes, whose bilaterally balanced application, including vertical stripes on the breast, emphasizes the tense symmetry of the figure. The figure with human face combines glaze covering the body with a head left mostly unglazed and painted after firing with mineral pigments that have largely worn off. (Although most surviving figures of this period are glazed wholly or partially, some are painted only with pigments that sometimes include gold leaf).[5] The breast and wings of this figure, like the wings of the other figure, are dappled with spots created by a resist process.

Belying their impressive presence, figures like this were made with techniques of rapid mass-production. Reliance upon multiple molds for parts to be assembled accounts for close formal resemblance among figures, although hand-worked details and variety in glazing formats differentiate one group from another. The extravagant and complicated use of polychrome glaze was limited to a narrow time span between the end of the seventh century and the 730s,[6] and production seems to

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have been concentrated largely in workshops in Chang'an. The resemblance of these tomb-guardian creatures, in overall form as well as details such as the proportion of the pedestals, to the retinue said to have come from the tomb in metropolitan Luoyang (Henan Province) of general Liu Tingxun, who died in A.D. 728,[7] suggests that they were made around the same time, possibly by the same artisans using related molds. By the mid-eighth century, as the Tang empire suffered economic problems brought on by expansion as well as a massive rebellion, production of such elaborate guardians of the dead came to an abrupt halt.

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1. The best-known large set of such figures, formerly in the Eumorfopolous collection, is now in the British Museum. Jessica Rawson, ed., *The British Museum Book of Chinese Art* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1993), figs. 93, 158. The group, which numbers thirteen pieces including horses, camels, and grooms, is said to come from the tomb of general Liu Tingxun, who died in 728. Another set of ten figures is in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. Robert D. Jacobsen, "Ceramic Tomb Sets of Early T'ang," *Minneapolis Institute of Arts Bulletin* 64 (1978–80): plates 1, 7. Other sets are in the Buffalo Museum of Science (ibid., plate 10) and the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (ibid., plate 11).

2. The development of Chinese funerary structures is discussed in Ann Paludan, "Funerary Structures," in *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner (New York: Grove's Dictionaries, 1996), 6: 693–705.

3. William Watson, *Tang and Liao Ceramics* (New York: Rizzoli, 1984), pp. 205–10. The evolution in form and meaning of this pair is described in detail in Mary H. Fong, "Tomb-Guardian Figures: Their Evolution and Iconography," in *Ancient Mortuary Traditions of China*, ed. George Kuwayama (Los Angeles: Far Eastern Art Council, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1991), pp. 84–93.

4. The gaping mouth is less common than a closed-mouth grimace on such figures.

5. A pair of earth spirits in the Baltimore Museum of Art is decorated entirely with mineral pigments and gold leaf. Frances Klapthor, *Chinese Ceramics from the Collection of the Baltimore Museum of Art* (Baltimore: Baltimore Museum of Art, 1993), pp. 20–22.

6. Virginia Bower, "Sui and Tang Dynasty Human Figurines," *Studio Potter* 16, no. 1 (December 1987): 61.

7. See note 1.

Tray with landscape

China, Ming dynasty, 15th century
Lacquer over wood, mother-of-pearl inlay, brass
Height 3.25, width 16.25, length 39.0 cm
S1997.34

This tray is remarkable for its use of twisted and straight brass wire as an accent along the upper and lower rims of the cavetto, an uncommon feature in Chinese lacquerware, and for the landscape design, which has no known precedent. The chronological development of mother-of-pearl inlaid lacquer is still imprecisely understood, but this meticulously crafted example fits well into a style associated with the mid-Ming period, beginning in the second half of the fifteenth century. In the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), most lacquer decorators rendered designs copied from pattern books and woodblock prints, with auspicious motifs and illustrations of famous tales predominating. On this tray, a delightfully unorthodox landscape is presented instead, attesting to a strong creative spirit in some mid-Ming lacquer workshops.

The Chinese have been using lacquer for about seven thousand years. Raw lacquer is sap from the *Rhus verniciflua* tree, and, once harvested and processed, it can be exploited for dual purposes. Lacquer is both extraordinarily practical, like a premodern plastic, and an ideal medium for artistic expression. Applied as a lightweight coating over a substrate (wood is the most common choice), lacquer offers protection against insect damage, and it is virtually impervious to effects from acid or alkali. It is, however, a difficult material to work. Decorated lacquerware requires an enormous expenditure of time and labor, beginning with the collecting and purifying of the raw material and coloring it with pigments. A substrate needs to be prepared, which will be coated with individual, thin layers of lacquer, numbering from dozens to hundreds of coats, depending on the type of object and the decoration planned.

For this tray, pieces of mother-of-pearl were set into very slightly recessed beds cut into the lacquer surface; then a few coats of clear lacquer were applied over the tray to secure the inlay. Any excess was scraped and polished away to create a smooth, level surface in which the sparkling colors of the shell shine against a satiny black background. Lacquer with inlay has a long history that can be traced to the Shang dynasty (ca. 1600–ca. 1050 B.C.), when some objects were embellished with glittering bits of shell. The creation of complex pictorial designs consisting mostly of pieces of mother-of-pearl did not appear until the Tang dynasty (618–907). This approach to decorating lacquer gradually matured, becoming quite sophisticated in the twelfth century and reaching a new style and high point at the end of the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368) and into the early Ming. In the fourteenth century, artisans began using relatively small, thin pieces of mother-of-pearl (mostly from the inner layer of the haliotis shell), which allowed for greater exploitation of the luster and iridescence of the inlay. Simultaneously, designs became more detailed. This period set a trend followed throughout the Ming.

Given the excessive time and labor required to create elaborately decorated lacquerware, this craft was called "wanton" by ancient Confucian authors.[1] Nevertheless, the status of decorated lacquerware as a luxury good at the imperial court and demanded by the wealthy elite continued unabated into the Ming dynasty and later; although a few late Ming writers, including Wen Zhenheng (1585–1645) in *Zhang wu zhi* (Superfluous things), a book that describes objects suitable for elegant living, suggest that some inlaid lacquer was too fussy for a scholar's use. The pictorial landscape on this tray probably did not fall into that category, and it was likely made for use in a scholar's studio. Trays of this size seem to have been used to hold small handscrolls; if such an object were a gift, the tray would allow for a particularly elegant presentation.

Difficult to read in reproduction, the intricate and unusual design on the tray is worth describing, especially since it has been misinterpreted by other scholars.[2] In previous publications, the tray has been identified as featuring the Three Friends of Winter, a classic Chinese motif that consists of a combination of three hardy plants—the pine, plum, and bamboo. Their ability to stay green or flower in the winter came to symbolize the steadfastness of a scholar's moral purity. In fact, however, a plum tree is not represented on the tray; moreover, the bamboo and pine play only minor roles in the design. The scene appears to be a fresh, nonformulaic landscape, unburdened by stereotyped symbols.

The sky is dominated by a celestial orb surrounded by a halo of clouds. Boughs from a large, twisted hardwood tree spread out expansively, both horizontally and vertically, and at the base of the tree there is a large, pierced rock. The artisan's talent for detailed work is apparent in the two tiny mandarin ducks and the dragonfly delicately incised into the shell representing the rock. A waterfall issues between the rock and tree trunk, cascading in arcs into the foreground. Its narrow, thin strips attest to the patience and high skill of the workmanship. A recumbent animal is difficult to identify because the shell inlay for the head has been lost; it may be a wild hare. A few exceptionally bright, colorful pieces of shell in the area of the tree and the rock are later replacements, but most of the design is intact.

A lacquer box bearing an inscription dated to 1487, now in the Hong Kong collection of Helen and C. P. Lin, offers an important clue for dating the tray.[3] Both display a treatment of the pictorial elements in which generous space surrounds the motifs, and the size and color of the mother-of-pearl are similar. Both incorporate twisted brass wire—rare on Chinese lacquer objects but more common in Korean and Ryukyuan production. Chinese workshops seem to have employed wire most often in the mid-Ming dynasty, and its presence helps to refute a fourteenth-century date once proposed for the Sackler tray.[4] The combination here of small and medium-sized pieces of mother-of-pearl in the design is also more typical of fifteenth- than fourteenth-century production. With its unusual wire decoration and innovative design, this tray makes a major contribution to the already generous holding of Chinese lacquerware in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery.[5]

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Paul Jett, "An Example of the Use of Brass in Chinese Lacquerware," *Archives of Asian Art* 43 (1990): 59–60; Yu-kuan Lee, *Oriental Lacquer Art* (New York: Weatherhill, 1972), p. 147, no. 79.

NOTES

1. Traditional attitudes toward Chinese lacquer are discussed in Suo Yuming, *Zhongguo chi gongyi yanjiu lun ji* (Collection of essays on Chinese laquer art) (Taibei: Guoli gugong bowuyuan, 1977), pp. 135–37. See also James C. Y. Watt and Barbara Brennan Ford, *East Asian Lacquer: The Florence and Herbert Irving Collection* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991), p. 8.

2. The tray is published and incorrectly described in Yu-kuan Lee, *Oriental Lacquer Art* (New York: Weatherhill, 1972), p. 147, no. 79. Paul Jett follows Lee's description in "An Example of the Use of Brass in Chinese Lacquerware," *Archives of Asian Art* 43 (1990): 59–60.

3. For an illustration and description, see Hu Shih-chang et al., *Two Thousand Years of Chinese Lacquer* (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong Art Museum, 1993), pp. 174–75.

4. Lee, *Oriental Lacquer Art*, p. 147; Jett, "Use of Brass in Chinese Lacquerware," p. 59.

5. For an introduction to the lacquer collection, see entries by Ann Yonemura, in Thomas Lawton et al., *Asian Art in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery: The Inaugural Gift* (Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 1987), pp. 249–77.

Small table

China, Ming dynasty, ca. 15th century
Lacquer over wood
Height 14.3, width 27.6, length 51.5 cm
S1997.36

From antiquity, lacquered furniture was prized at the Chinese imperial court and enjoyed by the wealthy elite. Ownership of costly, richly decorated furnishings like this small table announced social position and status. The table is a rarity since most lightweight, portable pieces of furniture, especially those with delicate lacquer decoration, have been damaged over time. Lacquer decoration cracks or chips if the furniture substrate warps or a joint becomes loose. Here, the deep cracks along the width of the top are relatively minor and do not distract from the table's original impact.

The lavish marbled design is the Chinese lacquer technique called *tixi* (often known in the West by the Japanese name *guri*).[1] *Tixi* lacquer is striking for its vivid coloristic effect and strong sense of geometric pattern. It is created by applying numerous layers of lacquer in alternating bands of colors, usually red and black, and then carving a design into the lacquer surface to reveal the colored strata. Classic *tixi* designs consist of trifoil "sword pommel" scrolls (*jianhua*), as seen on the tabletop, and wavy grasslike scrolls (*xiangcao*), such as those on the table apron and legs. Although early antecedents for *tixi* exist, the technique matured and became a mainstay of the lacquer repertory in the Song dynasty (960–1279). Metalware decorated with pommel scrolls from that period seems to have provided a model that lacquer specialists followed. Gradually, scroll designs as a motif to decorate metal objects lost popularity; in contrast, after *tixi* lacquer came into favor in the Song dynasty, it remained in demand.

The size and proportions of the table suggest that it may have been used in multiple contexts. Previously, it has been identified as a "*kang* table," drawing attention to its use on the built-in, hollow platforms called *kang*s that were common in premodern homes in north China.[2] Heated air from a stove was circulated beneath a *kang* to make it a warm place for sitting and sleeping in the winter. A *kang* was typically furnished with low tables and elbow rests for the comfort of the sitters. Wooden platform couches and alcove beds that were popular year-round in south China were similarly furnished. The Sackler table is actually quite small for a *kang* table; its scale is more ideal for use on a platform couch. Empty of cups or other small items, it could have served as an armrest. On occasion, it may also have been placed atop a full-sized table as a decorative stand to elevate and offset a vase or incense burner.

Consistent with the reputation of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) as the apex of furniture design, this table exhibits a harmonious profile and almost sculptural presence. The dramatic swell of the cabriole legs enlivens its form, which is further animated by the gentle uplift of the everted table ends. These softly rounded forms avoid the defect of some Ming everted flanges that incline too steeply or are sharply angular. Of special note are the triangular flanges that jut out from behind the "knees" of the table legs. These decorative projections preserve a feature associated with elaborate Song dynasty (960–1279) furniture, much of which was decorated with *tixi* lacquer. Although virtually no furniture from the Song dynasty is extant, to judge from paintings, *tixi* furniture was highly prized at the time.[3] Overall, in both form and surface decoration, the Sackler table conveys a subtly archaistic tone.

The task of dating this table reflects changing scholarship. In 1972, Yu-kuan (Sammy) Lee, a scholar of lacquer and previous owner of the table, suggested its provenance in the fifteenth century or earlier.[4] Subsequently, because the chronological development of *tixi* lacquer is much debated, it was reattributed to the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368), specifically to the fourteenth century. From today's perspective, a date in the fifteenth century, or slightly earlier or later in the Ming dynasty, seems appropriate.[5] The individual pommel scroll motifs are not carved with the sense of elastic spring, depth, and sculptural quality characteristic of Yuan *tixi* objects. Instead, the carving is relatively more shallow and the pattern more relaxed and schematic, typical features of mid-Ming lacquer. Nonetheless, the design is forceful and exceptionally well balanced, with the scale of the individual pommel motifs in proportion to the size of the table. These traits began to degenerate in the sixteenth century, helping to situate the Sackler table earlier.

The Arthur M. Sackler Gallery possesses an exceptionally strong and varied collection of *tixi* lacquer, including a tray of Song dynasty date and several Yuan and Ming dynasty trays and boxes.[6] With the addition of this table, it is possible to chart the evolution of marbled *tixi* lacquer later into the Ming period. It is also a remarkable delight to offer for study an important piece of small furniture of a category rarely seen in museum collections.

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Yu-kuan Lee, *Oriental Lacquer Art* (New York: Weatherhill, 1972), p. 300, no. 229.

NOTES

1. For a concise history of *tixi* lacquer, see Lee King-tsi and Hu Shih-chang, "On Chinese *Tixi* Lacquer," *Orientations* 24, no. 9 (September 1993): 65–68.

2. See identification by Yu-kuan Lee, *Oriental Lacquer Art* (New York: Weatherhill, 1972), p. 300, no. 229.

3. For example, see a table and a seating platform in two of the four hanging scrolls that constitute the set of paintings entitled *The Eighteen Scholars,* now in the National Palace Museum, Taiwan. By an anonymous court artist, these scrolls have traditionally been attributed to the Song dynasty but are now considered to be Ming copies. See National Palace Museum, ed., *Hua zhong jiaju tezhan* (Special exhibition of paintings depicting furniture) (Taibei: National Palace Museum, 1996), plates 19–20.

4. Lee, *Oriental Lacquer Art,* p. 330.

5. See James C. Y. Watt and Barbara Brennan Ford, *East Asian Lacquer: The Florence and Herbert Irving Collection* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991), pp. 46–61, for a group of *tixi* lacquers of different dates.

6. See Lee, *Oriental Lacquer Art,* p. 100, no. 39 for the Song dynasty tray; for later lacquer pieces now in the Sackler Gallery, see pp. 117, 119, 132, and 178. Some of the dates proposed by Yu-kuan Lee for these objects deserve reconsideration.

Wind in the Courtyard Pines (Tingyuan songfeng tu)

China, Ming dynasty, 15th century
Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk
93.3 x 56.6 cm
F1998.2

Charles Lang Freer frequently asked friends to join him in examining art objects. For instance, in 1916 Freer and three of his closest friends — Louisine Havemeyer (1855–1929), Agnes E. Meyer (1887–1970), and her husband Eugene (1875–1959) — shared their opinions about a group of seventy Chinese paintings owned by the Shanghai art dealer, Pang Yuanji (1864–1949). Pang had published the scrolls, which purported to date from the Tang through the Yuan dynasty (618–1368), in *Antique Famous Chinese Paintings*[1] and had his assistant, Pang Zanchen, take them to the United States with the specific intent of showing them to Freer.

Pencil notations in Freer's copy of *Antique Famous Chinese Paintings* identify the nineteen scrolls he purchased[2] as well as those acquired by Louisine Havemeyer[3] and the Meyers.[4] *Wind in the Courtyard Pines* is one of ten paintings Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer purchased from Pang Yuanji in 1916. Elizabeth Meyer Lorentz inherited the painting from her mother in 1970. Mrs. Lorentz's anniversary gift reunites *Wind in the Courtyard Pines* with two other paintings from the same group that her parents bequeathed to the Freer Gallery of Art.[5]

The entry in *Antique Famous Chinese Paintings* states that *Wind in the Courtyard Pines* is the work of Zhao Boju, a Song dynasty (960–1279) artist who was active in the twelfth century.[6] That attribution is based on a four-character signature written on the lower right edge of the composition. However, the large size of those characters and their prominent placement suggest they might be a later interpolation. Added support for this suggestion is provided by three small oval perforations in the silk, also on the right edge of the scroll, that may have resulted when a previously existing signature was removed. A nine-character title slip now attached to the back of the panel supports the Zhao Boju attribution. The title slip was written by Lu Hui (1851–1920), an artist who served as an adviser to Pang Yuanji. Lu Hui's calligraphy appears on many Chinese paintings in the Freer Gallery's collection that Charles Lang Freer purchased from Pang Yuanji.

Several seals affixed to *Wind in the Courtyard Pines* provide information about the earlier history of the painting. A small rectangular six-character seal, *Xuzhai shending mingji* (Famous relic examined and approved by Xuzhai), appears on the lower right margin of the painting. Xuzhai was the name of Pang Yuanji's study; he frequently added this seal to paintings in his collection. In the lower left corner of the painting is a large rectangular seal, *Wujiang Shi Minggu shending yin* (Examination and approval seal of Shi Minggu of Wujiang). Shi Minggu (1434–1496), also known as Shi Jian, was a well-known Ming dynasty (1368–1644) connoisseur who collected a large number of early calligraphies and paintings.[7]

Another large rectangular seal, *Yanchaotang shuhua yin* (Calligraphy and painting seal of Yanchaotang), is affixed in the lower right corner of the painting. This seal might also have been added by Shi Minggu, although the Yanchaotang (Yanchao Hall) is not mentioned in any biographical records. Finally, in the upper right corner of the painting is an impression of a small two-character seal, *Shaoxing*. A seal with these two characters was used by Gaozong (reigned 1127–62), the first Southern Song ruler. Shaoxing was the last of Gaozong's three reign titles (1131–62).

Small rocks, shrubs, and tall pines rendered in ink and light color appear in the foreground of the painting. A scholar attended by a servant leans against a railing of the veranda and gazes into the courtyard. Behind the scholar is a low couch with a small screen and a ceramic pillow placed at one end. Through the window at the right, another servant can be seen arranging objects on a table. Plants and ducks in the inner courtyards are visible through the open doorways. The diagonal elements established by the pine trees and the tiled roofs coincide to emphasize the importance of the quiet figure of the scholar.

From the brushwork and the composition, it is reasonable to attribute *Wind in the Courtyard Pines* to the fifteenth century, perhaps to an artist working in Suzhou, Jiangsu Province. The collection of Chinese paintings in the Freer Gallery includes representative works by most of the great traditional masters. *Wind in the Courtyard Pines,* a composition that displays the artist's versatility in rendering architecture, landscape, and human figures, enriches the gallery's holdings in a courtly genre that has remained an integral part of China's cultural traditions for more than a millennium.

Thomas Lawton

NOTES

1. *Antique Famous Chinese Paintings* (Shanghai: privately printed, 1915).

2. *Antique Famous Chinese Paintings,* plate 1 (accession number F16.520), plate 2 (F16.521) [A handwritten note in slightly fractured English suggesting it might have been added by Pang Zanchen was added at the top of the printed description. Since these notes reflect attitudes prevalent shortly after the turn of the century, a few of them are included with the plate numbers: "CLF for comparison with Japanese copies." "From Canton collector — will get pedigree"]; plate 3 (F16.522) ["specimen of deep inner understanding of nature"]; plate 5 (F16.523) ["Not seen, but sent specially for CLF and purchased from a friend who is a superior judge of Tang and later paper — once owned by Tuan Fang (Duanfang 1861–1911)"]; plate 6 (F16.524) ["For CLF to show along with early Japanese Buddhist paintings"]; plate 7 (F16.525) ["Specially for CLF by Mr. Pang" "7 & 14 bought at $2,000 Mexican each — very cheap — but similar pieces when found ten years ago brought nothing. The Japanese even now will not buy Sung or earlier paintings. This one badly repainted"]; plate 13 (F16.526) ["Study the man's figure — and fun both hunter and horse have fighting wild beasts"]; plate 14 (F16.527) ["Specially for CLF by Mr. Pang" "7 & 11 both from one party. This one cost 2000 Mexican dollars, same as No. 7. Sometimes even now, good pictures can be bought very cheap. Genuine writing of the famous art emperor."]; plate 16 (F16.528) ["Should have, as writing and seal of Kao Tsung (Gaozong) are believed authentic"]; plate 17 (F16.529) ["American poets love such

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dream houses"]; plate 18 (F16.530); plate 21 (F16.531) ["Ask CLF how he likes. Cousin Pang (i.e., Pang Zanchen) says if not too small for museum should not lose"]; plate 24 (F16.532) ["CLF should compare with Japanese Kano school"]; plate 27 (F16.533) ["Good — for CLF to be shown only him. Don't consider poor photograph"]; plate 35 (F16.534); plate 36 (F16.535); plate 38 (F16.536) ["Cousin Pang likes"]; plate 50 (F16.478) ["Ask CLF to keep in his museum forever as very costly Ma Lin — and compare with the big scroll by his father"]; plate 58 (F16.537) ["Good. To be shown."].

3. *Antique Famous Chinese Paintings,* plates 4, 11, 31, 40, 43, 45, 46, 56. A handwritten note added to the printed description for plate 56 reads, "CLF exchanged to Mrs. Havemeyer for 35."

4. *Antique Famous Chinese Paintings,* plates 8, 20, 22, 23, 26, 28, 30, 42, 59, 63.

5. F70.32 and F70.36. See *Antique Famous Chinese Paintings,* entries 20 and 26; *Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Memorial Exhibition* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1971), pp. 56–57, 62–63.

6. *Antique Famous Chinese Paintings,* plate 23. Pencil notation: "Real — Artist made pictures very early. Examine Mrs. H & M. Mrs. Meyer."

7. Biographical information about Shi Minggu appears in *Mingren zhuanji ziliao suoyin* (Index to Ming biographical data) (Taipei: National Central Library, 1966), p. 106. Du Mu (1458–1525) includes a list of several of the calligraphies and paintings from Shi Minggu's collection in *Yuyibian* (Compilation of implied meanings), Meishu congshu ed., vol. 44 (Peking: Guoguangshe, 1936), pp. 1a–10b. The greater portion of Shi Minggu's collection was lost when fire destroyed his home at the end of the Chenghua period (1465–87).

River, Mountains, and Distant Peaks (Xishan yuanxiu tu)

China, Ming dynasty, 16th century
Album leaf, ink and color on silk
23.1 x 22.6 cm
F1998.3

One well-informed Chinese scholar has observed that the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368) "did not last long — but it lasted just long enough to alter the course of Chinese art history."[1] In avant-garde Chinese painting the changes to which the scholar was referring involved a crucial transition from an art form that — until the later decades of the preceding Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279) — had focused on nature to one that drew its inspiration from earlier painting traditions. A remarkable aspect of that change was the Chinese artists' intellectual examination of the past. They sought specific, recognizable painting styles or motifs that might serve as the basis for their own interpretations. Informed viewers understood those artistic references, however subtle they might be, and evaluated the achievements of later painters on the basis of their ability to imbue the earlier styles or motifs with new, personal meaning.[2]

During the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), Chinese artists inherited painting traditions — both technical and theoretical — that spanned several millennia. Among the Ming artists who achieved supremacy, those associated with the Zhe School exerted lasting influence. In Chinese art theory, the term Zhepai, or Zhe School, was introduced by Dong Qichang (1555–1636) to designate painters who lived and worked in the area of Zhejiang Province in southeastern China.[3] Recent research has demonstrated that artists from many different provinces of China, including Zhejiang, Fujian, and Jiangsu, were associated with the Zhe School.[4]

River, Mountains, and Distant Peaks is an excellent example of a Ming dynasty Zhe School painting that draws its subject and technique from a tradition that had been perfected by Southern Song artists several hundred years earlier. Simply drawn buildings on the riverbank in the lower left corner of the composition are dwarfed by large, windblown trees growing from a foreground promontory. A narrow bridge connects the elements in the lower left with a small tip of land at the lower right and, compositionally, leads the viewer into the distance, which is dominated by light blue mountain peaks. The asymmetrical composition is based on traditions usually associated with Ma Yuan (active 1189–1224) and Xia Gui (active 1194–1224).[5]

In the hands of Zhe School artists, the basic compositional elements of the Ma Yuan–Xia Gui tradition remained intact, although the Ming painters usually emphasized clearly articulated forms and were less interested in achieving the illusion of enveloping mist that is a defining feature of Southern Song landscapes. The Southern Song style, rather than its spiritual content, was the subject of these Zhe School paintings, and, ultimately, they must be admired on the basis of their technical perfection and decorative appeal.[6]

The Freer Gallery of Art houses an outstanding collection of works by Zhe School masters. With few exceptions, those paintings were attributed to Song dynasty artists when they were acquired by Charles Lang Freer in the early years of the twentieth century.[7]

River, Mountains, and Distant Peaks is unsigned, and there are no seals affixed to the silk. A six-character title slip in the upper right corner of the paper support attributes the painting to the famous Five Dynasties (907–60) monumental landscape artist Jing Hao (active tenth century), but there is no logical explanation, stylistic or textual, for such an attribution. On the basis of the brushwork and the composition, *River, Mountains, and Distant Peaks* can be identified as the work of an anonymous sixteenth-century Ming dynasty Zhe School artist following the style of Ma Yuan and Xia Gui. This small, elegant album leaf further enhances the Freer Gallery's collection of works by Zhe School artists.

Thomas Lawton

COLLECTION OF EUGENE
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GIFT OF ELIZABETH MEYER
HONOR OF
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NOTES

1. James C. Y. Watt, "Antiquarianism and Naturalism," in *Possessing the Past* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996), p. 427.

2. Max Loehr discusses these fundamental changes in *Chinese Painting After Sung: Yale Art Gallery Ryerson Lecture, March 2, 1967* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967); "Phases and Content in Chinese Painting," *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Chinese Painting* (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1972), pp. 285–97; *The Great Painters of China* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), pp. 231–98.

3. Susan Bush, *The Chinese Literati on Painting: Su Shih (1037–1101) to Tung Ch'i-ch'ang (1555–1636)* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 173–74.

4. For a discussion of the Zhe School, see Richard M. Barnhart, *Painters of the Great Ming: The Imperial Court and the Zhe School* (Dallas, Tex.: Dallas Museum of Art, 1993).

5. For biographical information on Ma Yuan, see the entry by Richard Edwards in *Sung Biographies: Painters* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1976), pp. 109–15. James Cahill provides a biography of Xia Gui in *The New Encyclopedia Britannica: Macropaedia* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1979), pp. 650–54. Cahill also compiled annotated lists of paintings attributed to Ma Yuan and Xia Gui in *An Index of Early Chinese Painters and Painting: T'ang, Sung and Yuan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1980), pp. 87–92, 152–61.

6. Loehr, *Great Painters of China*, p. 261.

7. For some examples of Zhe School paintings in the Freer Gallery that originally were attributed to artists who lived during earlier periods, see Barnhart, *Paintings of the Great Ming*, pp. 6–9, figs. 1–8, 25, and 51.

荆浩溪山遠岫

Platform table

China, Ming dynasty, late 16th–17th century
Lacquer over wood, mother-of-pearl inlay; paint restorations
Height 44.5, width 36.7, length 60.1 cm
F1995.5

Elaborately decorated lacquered furniture has been prized in China for more than two and a half millennia, but despite its long history, relatively few examples made before the eighteenth century survive.[1] Usually constructed with a softwood frame or "core" that is easily susceptible to damage, lacquered furniture seldom withstands prolonged use. Deterioration of the wood frame may cause the lacquer surface to crack, ultimately destroying the furniture. Therefore, this platform table, which on the basis of style dates to the late sixteenth or seventeenth century, deserves close study.

The elegant form of the table compares favorably with furnishings crafted during the late Ming dynasty (1368–1644), which is generally recognized as the zenith of furniture design in China. Harmonious balance is achieved between a sense of impressive mass and graceful lightness. The table's rectangular top and solid platform base impart visual weight that is effectively offset by wide spaces between the table's slender legs that end in balletic inward curves. Airy quatrefoils that pierce the high, inset waist and long, sweeping cusped table aprons (whose undulating line is repeated along the platform base) both serve to lighten the bulk of the table.

The mother-of-pearl decoration reflects Ming dynasty aesthetics. The pictorial images resemble paintings produced for members of the wealthy elite, including the imperial court. Bian Wenjin (ca. 1354–1428), one of the founders of a new Ming style of colorful and overtly decorative bird-and-flower painting, may have indirectly provided inspiration for the inlay designs. One of Bian's scrolls entitled *The Hundred Birds and the Three Friends,* now in the Cleveland Museum of Art, features a dense composition of birds perched on blossoming plum branches and bamboo stalks, as well as standing in groups on an earthen embankment in a scene reminiscent of the one on the tabletop. Bian's work and that of his many followers provide imagery that lacquer artisans could have seen in the form of derivative compositions circulated in woodblock-printed books. The flowering plum on the tabletop and the camellia on the base are motifs of spring renewal, which is associated with wishes for longevity and may be the theme of the design here.

The intricacy of the inlay is typical of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Chinese work, but schemes that feature architectural settings populated by tiny figures are more common in Ming lacquerware than the naturalistic bird-and-flower design. Some of the original coherence of the design has been obscured by numerous campaigns of restoration that demonstrate continual use and high regard for the table through the centuries. Fortunately, the delicacy of the original work, including fine, incised lines on small pieces of shell inlay, is still evident. Some missing pieces of shell have been replaced by bits of iridescent purple mother-of-pearl that stand out as restorations, and in other areas, black lacquer repair covers areas where shell has been lost. The greatest confusion appears among the birds depicted on the embankment, some of which now consist of disembodied heads rising directly from the path. Other significant losses occur in the geometric border designs along the edges of the table.

The treatment of the mother-of-pearl designs can be compared to those on a tall Chinese platform table dated to the sixteenth century that is now in the Museé Guimet. On both tables, small, thick pieces of shell were assembled in a mosaiclike fashion to create contorted, pierced garden rocks.[2] The Guimet stand, which is indisputably Chinese, helps to confirm Chinese workmanship for the Freer's table, but it must be recognized that a remote possibility exists that the Freer's table was crafted in the once independent kingdom of the Ryukyu Islands (of which Okinawa is the largest). Beginning in the fourteenth century, Ryukyuan artists closely imitated Chinese lacquerware and created many objects with mother-of-pearl inlay, some of which are indistinguishable from Chinese work.[3]

The form and design of the Freer's platform table conform to Ming design, but the height is unorthodox. In Ming society, both "high" and "low" tables were used, but at forty-four and a half centimeters, the Freer's table falls between these categories. Chinese high tables with a solid platform base were generally fifty-five or more centimeters tall and served as stands for displaying an incense burner, small Buddhist sculpture, or some other special object. Low tables, in contrast, typically were less than thirty centimeters and were used on a *kang,* which is a raised brick platform heated from below and found in traditional buildings in north China. *Kang* tables, which do not generally have a platform base, were used for dining as well as for writing or holding objects.

Most surviving tables that are similar in date, size, and decoration to the Freer's example are in Japanese collections, the immediate source for this table.[4] Grand reception rooms in Japanese Buddhist temples and wealthy warrior households typically included a large alcove space with a platform raised slightly above the main floor. This created an ideal area for displaying a table about forty or fifty centimeters high. Paintings were hung above the tables that held incense burners. Several temples in Japan still employ Chinese Ming period mother-of-pearl inlaid tables in this manner. Whether Chinese temples during the Ming ever had similar displays is not known, since many customs now preserved in Japan were brought back by monks who visited China but have completely disappeared from Chinese memory. The idea that the Freer's table was made for export to Japan seems the most compelling explanation for its size. Moreover, the lavish mother-of-pearl decoration is consistent with the many Chinese small-scale lacquer objects, such as cup stands and trays, that the Japanese were importing in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The survival of this platform table is significant for the study of Chinese furniture. It draws attention to the importance of lacquered furniture in Ming China, which is often disregarded in studies that concentrate on the category of "scholar's furni-

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ture." Such furniture features sleek designs constructed of plain hardwood. The fact that high-quality lacquered furniture was produced in some quantity in the Ming period for both domestic and export use is often overlooked.[5] Furthermore, this platform table focuses attention on the close relationship that existed at the end of the Ming period among China, Japan, and the Ryukyuan kingdom. It is to be hoped that in the future more evidence will become available for the study of the history of East Asian lacquered furniture, but at present, this table helps expand our understanding of China's contributions to this craft.

Jan Stuart

PUBLISHED

Arakawa Hirokazu, *Raden* (Inlaid mother-of-pearl lacquer) (Tokyo: Dohosha, 1985), p. 359, nos. 73–74.

NOTES

1. Notable ancient exceptions include a lacquered platform and low tables discovered in Warring States (480–221 B.C.) tombs in Henan and Hubei Provinces. See Michael Knight, "Chinese Lacquered Wood Furniture: Two Examples from the Collection of Mimi and Raymond Hung," *Orientations* 29, no. 1 (January 1998): 24–25.

2. See Michel Beurdeley, *Chinese Furniture*, trans. Katherine Watson (New York: Kodansha International, 1979), p. 117.

3. A Ryukyuan box dated to the sixteenth–seventeenth century that displays a rock similar to the one on Freer's table is illustrated in James C. Y. Watt and Barbara Brennan Ford, *East Asian Lacquer: The Florence and Herbert Irving Collection* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991), cat. no. 162. Another analogous but later table attributed to the Ryukyu Islands has a design of birds and a plum tree. The table was published in Sotheby's *Japanese Works of Art Auction Catalogue*, New York, September 20, 1996, lot no. 86. Previously the same table had been assigned a Korean provenance in an advertisement for Joseph P. Carroll, Ltd. Korean Fine Arts, in *Orientations*, June 1995. The confusion underscores the uncertainties that plague the study of lacquered furniture.

4. For examples in Japanese collections, see Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, *Chugoku no raden* (Exhibition of mother-of-pearl Chinese lacquer art focused on the 14th–17th centuries, exhibited June 19th–July 29th, 1979) (Tokyo: Tokyo National Museum, 1979), cat. nos. 74–82; Arakawa Hironkazu, *Raden* (Inlaid mother-of-pearl lacquer) (Tokyo: Dohosha, 1985).

5. For example, in the late sixteenth century, when the possessions of the wealthy and influential official Yan Song were confiscated by the court, his collection contained many pieces of lacquered furniture, including seventeen beds said to be especially luxurious, fifteen of which were lacquered.

Vase with landscape

China, Jiangxi Province, Jingdezhen, Qing dynasty, Kangxi period, late 17th century
Porcelain with enamels over colorless glaze
Height 27.2, diameter 15.0 cm
S1997.12a–b

Inscribed:
Willows dark-green, flowers bright,
springtime's now just at its peak.
As mist disperses on the deep lake,
I can make out the twigs of trees.
Yunqiao
[Translated by Stephen D. Allee]

The lyrical landscape painting on this vase epitomizes a period of dramatic innovation in porcelain decoration. For much of the seventeenth century, the best ceramics made at Jingdezhen, China's "porcelain capital," located in Jiangxi Province, were produced for the literati class, who, in a situation without parallel, replaced the court as the major patrons of high-quality porcelains.[1] Imperial commissions ceased in 1620 with the death of the Wanli emperor and the imminent decline of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). They did not resume until 1683, when the imperial kilns recommenced operation in the Qing dynasty (1644–1911). During this long interregnum, the literati asserted a preference for more lively and painterly styles of porcelain decoration than the emperors favored. The scene that wraps around the Sackler's vase like an unrolled handscroll represents the new taste.[2]

Under active imperial patronage beginning in the fourteenth century, potters and decorators at Jingdezhen achieved exceptional technical effects. They created vast quantities of snowy white porcelain vessels with elaborate symbolic designs for the emperors. Emblems of imperial authority, especially the five-clawed dragon, interspersed with auspicious motifs, such as the fungus of immortality, bats, and children holding lotus flowers (which auger, respectively, for long life, good fortune, and plentiful progeny) decorated the imperial vessels. These pictorial devices were often treated like units of pattern repeated over the surface of a porcelain, giving the impression of a textile design. Sometimes the images were arrayed inside registers bounded by decorative borders.

Such regimented designs proved undesirable to literati customers, who in response to the growing commercialism and conspicuous consumption of late Ming society began acquiring porcelain.[3] Once cut off from imperial support, Jingdezhen's talented potters and decorators rushed to create wares like the Sackler's vase that appealed to scholars and wealthy merchants. When rotated, the vase reveals a combination of painting, poetry, and calligraphy — the so-called Three Perfections — whose unity in a single composition was regarded as the highest ideal in literati art.

"Scholar's decoration" for porcelain reached its zenith in the late seventeenth century, when the Sackler's vase was made. In the first half of the century, as a new motif for porcelain, some of the landscape designs revealed an awkwardness. Decorators' primary models were landscape scenes in woodblock-printed books. It took considerable experience to combine these images into continuous compositions like the one on the Sackler's vase, which unfurls around the three-dimensional vessel without spatial distortion and convincingly creates a feeling of recession in space.

The execution of the calligraphy on the vase is high caliber for a porcelain, and the presence of a seal mark painted in red enamel to resemble an artist's name seal, which appears below the inscription, furthers the illusion that the vessel is decorated with a seventeenth-century scholar's painting.[4] Porcelains as accomplished as the Sackler's vase were a source of inspiration for the Kangxi emperor (reigned 1662–1722), when he reopened the imperial kilns and began to commission wares emulating scholars' taste.

For the literati, landscape motifs were not only a source of aesthetic pleasure; they referred to the key cultural and political concept of eremitism. Chinese literati believed in the Confucian notion that government service was the highest moral duty. However, if the emperor was corrupt, or if a scholar was faced with serving a usurping dynasty (the situation for Ming citizens called to the Qing court), then, following the tradition of eremitism, a true gentleman refused government office. Instead he became a mountain recluse, or at least assumed the demeanor of a hermit, to protest the corrupt moral order. Vested with meaning as a symbol of ethical reclusion, landscapes quickly rose to prominence as a motif for porcelains collected by the literati. Even after landscapes lost their sense of political urgency, they remained popular.

The Sackler's vase is notable for the complementary relationship between the visual and poetic imagery. One of the characteristics of porcelain production at Jingdezhen, whether at imperial or private kilns, was the high degree of specialization of labor. Over fifty people were involved in producing even the simplest vessel. In this system, the tasks of writing calligraphy and executing a landscape painting were typically assigned to different specialists, who did not necessarily communicate with each other. Sometimes this situation led to a disjunction between word and image.[5] In contrast, while the landscape on the Sackler's vase does not literally illustrate the poem, the two present a unified mood. The painting on the vase is rendered in shades of green and coral red suggestive of tender springtime growth, an allusion to the season of the poem. And a sun that peeks above a band of mist hovering over the trees draws attention to the line "As mist disperses on the deep lake, I can make out the twigs of trees."

This elegant vase made for the private market in the Kangxi period complements the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery's holdings of seventeenth-century literati landscape paintings. At the same time, as a three-dimensional piece, it represents the type of quotidian object scholars used to furnish their homes and studios. Unlike their paintings that were stored away except for special viewing sessions, the vase received daily appreciation as an emblem of the aesthetic and cultural values that bound together China's educated elite. In a museum setting, the vase invites a viewer to assess the anomalous period of the seventeenth century, when literati support for porcelain spurred a creative, new style of decoration at Jingdezhen.

Jan Stuart

PUBLISHED

Louise A. Cort and Jan Stuart with a contribution by Laurence Chi-sing Tam, *Joined Colors: Decoration and Meaning in Chinese Porcelain* (Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in association with Tai Yip Co., 1993), plate 76, p. 151.

NOTES

1. Julia B. Curtis, *Chinese Porcelains of the Seventeenth Century: Landscapes, Scholars' Motifs and Narratives* (New York: China Institute Gallery, 1995), presents a detailed study of seventeenth-century porcelains that documents their position as an "anomaly in the history of Chinese ceramics" (p. 15) and introduces the innovative iconography of the period. Also see Julia B. Curtis, "Markets, Motifs, and Seventeenth-Century Porcelain from Jingdezhen," in *The Porcelains of Jingdezhen*, ed. Rosemary E. Scott, *Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia*, no. 16 (London: University of London, Percival David Foundation, 1993) pp. 123–50.

2. Stephen Little, *Chinese Ceramics of the Transitional Period: 1620–1683* (New York: China Institute in America, 1983), was among the first to point out the significance of landscapes as a new motif in the seventeenth century. See also Little, "Seventeenth-Century Landscape Painting and the Decoration of Chinese Ceramics," in Curtis, *Chinese Porcelains*, pp. 35–41.

3. See Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1991), for a study of consumerism and conspicuous consumption in seventeenth-century China.

4. At the upper right of the inscription, a leaf painted in red enamel appears. This is probably a workshop mark. For a similar mark, see Sir Michael Butler, Margaret Medley, and Stephen Little, *Seventeenth-Century Chinese Porcelain from the Butler Family Collection* (Alexandria, Va.: Art Services International, 1990), p. 184, no. 128. The Butler dish is decorated with a landscape painted in translucent enamels and bears a calligraphic inscription.

5. See Jan Stuart, "Unified Style in Chinese Painting and Porcelain in the 18th Century," *Oriental Art* 41, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 32–46; and Qianshen Bai, "The Irony of Copying the Elite: Preliminary Study of Poetry, Calligraphy, and Painting on 17th-century Jingdezhen Porcelain," *Oriental Art* 41, no. 3 (Autumn 1995): 10–21.

Painting and Calligraphy by Zhu Da (Bada Shanren)

Thirteen works of painting and calligraphy

Zhu Da (1626–1705)
China, Qing dynasty, 1684–ca. 1705
Album leaves and hanging scrolls; ink on paper
F1998.27–.39

Twenty works of painting and calligraphy

Zhu Da (1626–1705)
China, Qing dynasty, ca. 1665–ca. 1705
Hanging scrolls, handscroll, albums, and album leaves; ink on paper or ink and color on paper
F1998.40–.59

Thanks to the generous financial support of the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation, the Freer Gallery of Art was recently able to purchase twelve important works of calligraphy and one painting by the consummate seventeenth-century individualist artist Zhu Da (1626–1705), commonly known by his sobriquet Bada Shanren, who was previously represented in the Freer Gallery by just one ten-leaf album of paintings. These thirteen works were purchased from the estate of the late Wang Fangyu (or Fred Fangyu Wang, 1913–1997), who taught Chinese language for many years at Yale University and together with his wife Sum Wai (1918–1996), devoted much of his private life to the collection and study of Zhu Da's art.

Prior to his demise, Professor Wang's was the most comprehensive private collec-

1 *Landscape after Dong Yuan*, Zhu Da (1626–1705), China, Qing dynasty, ca. 1693, album leaf, ink on paper, 26.4 x 14.2 cm. Purchase — Funds provided by the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation in honor of the 75th Anniversary of the Freer Gallery of Art, F1998.27

F1998.27–.39

F1998.40–.59

2 *Landscape after Dong Yuan* from *Landscapes after Song and Yuan Masters, Copied from Dong Qichang,* Zhu Da (1626–1705), China, Qing dynasty, ca. 1697, one of six album leaves, ink on paper, 31 x 24.6 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, bequest from the collection of Wang Fangyu and Sum Wai, donated in their memory by Mr. Shao F. Wang, F1998.55.1

tion of calligraphy and painting by Zhu Da anywhere in the world.[1] Through the kindness and generosity of his son Mr. Shao F. Wang, the Freer Gallery was also selected as the permanent repository for an additional twenty paintings and works of calligraphy by Zhu Da, a group that Professor Wang had personally identified as the core of his collection. This group is unique in many respects, and the included works, both individually and collectively, possess immense artistic and art historical value.

Wang Fangyu was one of the world's foremost experts on Zhu Da's life and art, focusing almost exclusively on this artist for more than half a century. Because of his thorough familiarity with classical Chinese literature, he was also uniquely equipped to decipher the artist's notoriously difficult poetry and interpret the quirkiness of his paintings and calligraphy. Many of Professor Wang's scholarly and collecting endeavors have been published over the years in a series of articles in Chinese as well as in a recent English-language catalogue for an important exhibition of Zhu Da's works.[2] In addition to the twenty works constituting Professor Wang's core collection, Mr. Shao F. Wang has made a further promised gift to the Freer of his father's extensive private research files containing much unpublished material relating to Zhu Da's life and art. This exceptional gift will add tremendous depth to our knowledge and understanding of these newly acquired works.

The seventeenth century was one of the most eventful and traumatic periods in the history of China. The first half of the century witnessed the irreversible deterioration and collapse of the last native Chinese dynasty, the Ming (1368–1644), and the subsequent invasion and conquest of China by Manchu forces from the northeast, who established the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) in its place. The second half of the century saw the Manchu conquerors consolidate the territory and institutions of their new empire and move toward reconciliation both politically and culturally with the Chinese people they now ruled. These events had a profound impact on the life and art of Zhu Da.

The seventeenth century was also one of the most dynamic and creative periods in the history of Chinese painting and calligraphy. The dominant "orthodox" school, which took certain established masters of the Song (968–1279) and Yuan (1279–1368) dynasties as its inspiration, largely owed its theory and practice to the works and art historical writings of the Ming dynasty painter, calligrapher, and connoisseur Dong Qichang (1555–1636), who exerted a significant influence on the art of Zhu Da as well. Following Dong Qichang, for example, Zhu Da not only painted original works in the style of the tenth-century artist Dong Yuan, but even directly copied Dong Qichang's own interpretations of that earlier painter (nos. 1, 2). At the same time, in reaction to this backward-looking and highly conservative direction in painting, many individual artists began to experiment freely with new, even boldly eccentric, styles and approaches. While Zhu Da actively participated in the orthodox movement that dominated painting in his times, he is best known as one of the most innovative and individualistic artists in the history of Chinese art.

Zhu Da was born into the princely Yiyang branch of the Ming imperial house, which had been established seven generations earlier in the city of Nanchang in Jiangxi Province. He received a strong traditional education in Chinese classical literature, and since several of his closest relatives were artists he presumably was exposed at an early age to the great tradition of Chinese painting and calligraphy. Having lost his family when Manchu armies captured Nanchang in 1646, the twenty-year-old fled for safety to the hinterlands of Jiangxi. As with many native Chinese in those perilous times, Zhu Da found it necessary to conceal his true identity and sought anonymity by joining a religious order. In 1648 he entered the Caodong sect of Chan (or Zen) Buddhism, where he remained for the next thirty years using the priestly names Chuanqi and Fajue, among others. Quickly establishing his reputation as a teacher, he eventually served as the abbot of a locally renowned Jiangxi monastery.

Though few survive, Zhu Da's first known works date to his years as a Buddhist monk. The album *Lotuses* (ca. 1665), which contains eight double-leaf paintings, is among the earliest works by Zhu Da residing in a museum outside China; each album leaf bears either the signature Chuanqi or a seal with the name Fajue. A prime Buddhist symbol of rebirth, lotuses appear in many of Zhu Da's paintings, both hanging scrolls and album leaves (nos. 3, 4). This album, however is the only known set of works devoted exclusively to the subject.

Despite the solace of religion, the acute bitterness and profound resentment Zhu Da felt toward the alien Manchu regime imbued the core of his emotional life and artistic expression. Although Chan philosophy and traditions remained integral to his art, he eventually lost faith in its formal practices. Around 1678 Zhu Da suffered an emotional breakdown, abandoned the priesthood in a fit of madness, and returned to Nanchang where he was discovered aimlessly wandering the streets in rags.

After recovering his sanity, Zhu Da continued to reside in Nanchang, supporting himself through poetry, painting, and calligraphy. Around 1684 he took the sobriquet Bada Shanren, the name he generally used in signatures on his works until his death in 1705. Under this name he was well known and highly regarded as an artist both in local circles and, to some extent, further afield. He continued to experience periodic episodes of mental and emotional instability, though sometimes he may have feigned "craziness" to avoid unwanted social situations. Whatever the truth, a number of Zhu Da's contemporaries recorded anecdotes about his generally eccentric behavior and frequently commented on the unusual and enigmatic qualities of his poetry and painting.

In total, the thirteen works purchased through the generosity of the Carpenter Foundation include twenty-five album leaves of calligraphy and one of painting, together with one matched pair of calligraphy hanging scrolls, a rarity among Zhu Da's surviving works (no. 5). Several works have a particularly high and sometimes

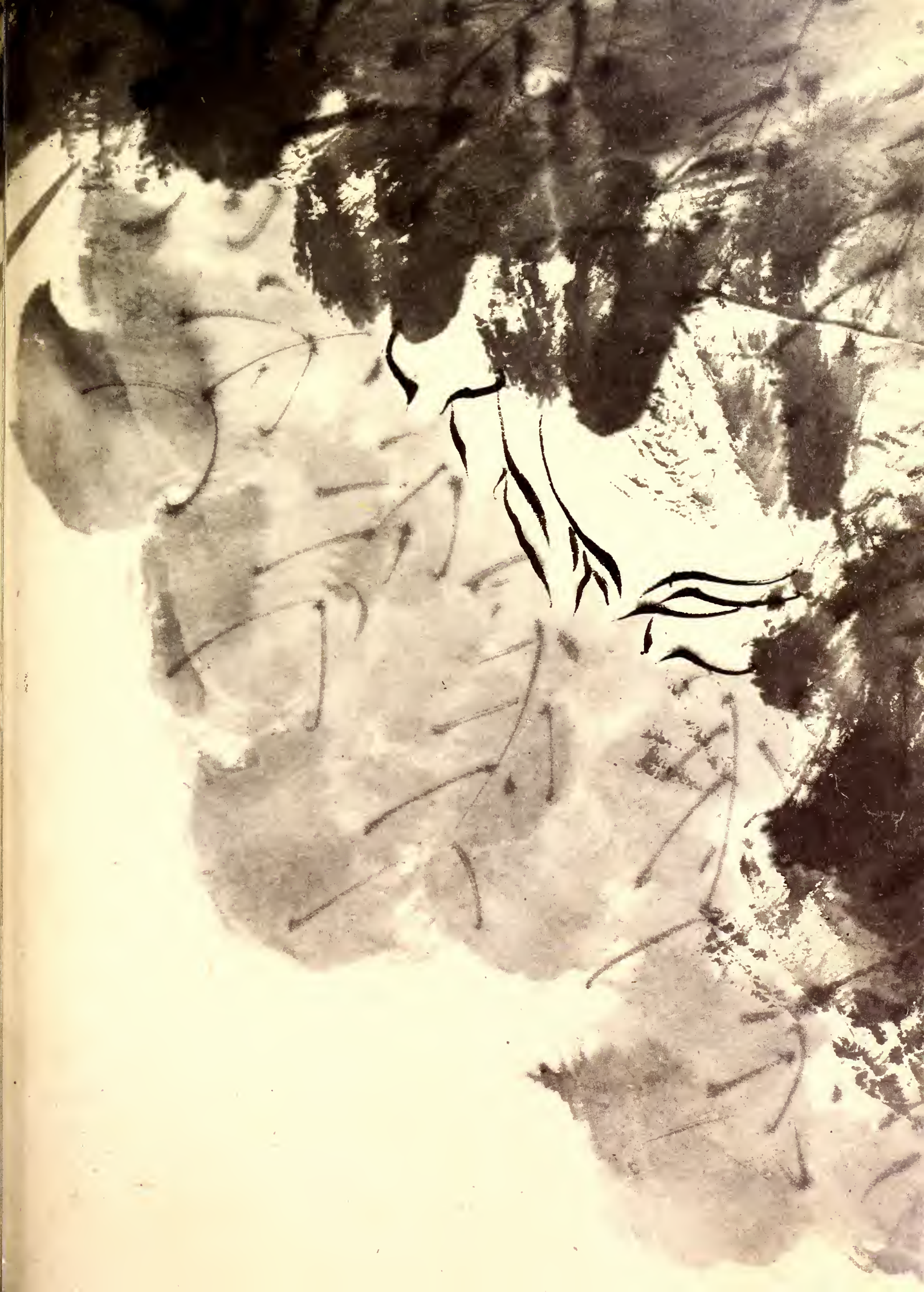
3 *Lotus and Ducks,* Zhu Da (1625–1705), China Qing dynasty, ca. 1696, hanging scroll, ink on paper, 184.3 x 95.1 cm. Bequest from the collection of Wang Fangyu and Sum Wal, donated in their memry by Mr. Shao F. Wang, Freer Gallery of Art F1998.45

overleaf: 4 Detail, *Lotuses,* Zhu Da (1626–1705), China, Qing dynasty, ca. 1665, one of eight double album leaves, ink on paper, 25.1 x 33.7 cm. Freer Gallery of Art bequest from the collection of Wang Fangyu and Sum Wai, donated in their memory by Mr. Shao F. Wang, F1998.53.5

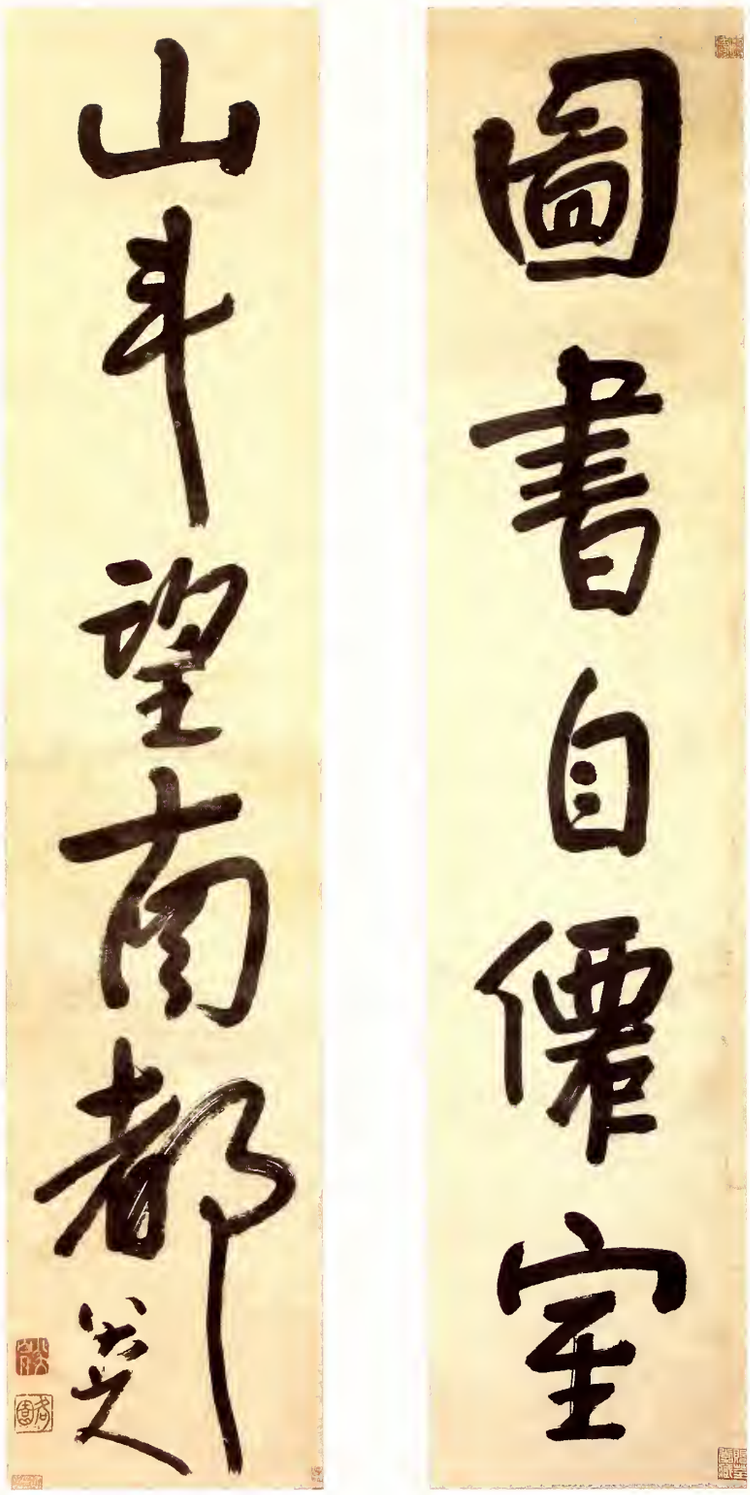
unique level of art historical importance for the study of Zhu Da's calligraphy. For example, his 1684 transcription of the *Inner Radiance Scripture of the Yellow Court (Huangting neijing jing),* an important Daoist text, is one of the earliest dated works of calligraphy by Zhu Da outside China and among the very first anywhere to bear the signature Bada Shanren (no. 6). Other works in the group date to the 1690s and early 1700s and primarily consist of famous poems or other texts by writers from earlier periods, particularly the Tang dynasty (618–907); for example, his transcription of a passage from the *Preface to the Sacred Writings (Shengjiao xu),* the original calligraphy of which was written by the courtier Chu Suiliang (596–658) for a text composed by Emperor Taizong (reigned 627–49) (F1998.28). Most of the texts in this group concern or describe the arts of painting and calligraphy and clearly held personal significance for Zhu Da. He is known to have written some of them out on more than one occasion, often using different formats or styles of script; for example, the two versions of a poem by the eighth-century writer Sun Ti about a landscape painting he had seen on the wall of a temple (F1998.33, F1998.43).

Among the twenty paintings and works of calligraphy received as a bequest from the collection of Wang Fangyu and Sum Wai, several also include more than one item. In total, there are sixteen items of calligraphy (one handscroll, six hanging scrolls, one album containing twenty leaves, and eight individual album leaves) and twenty-one items of painting (eight hanging scrolls, two

法堀釋傳縈



法堀釋傳繁

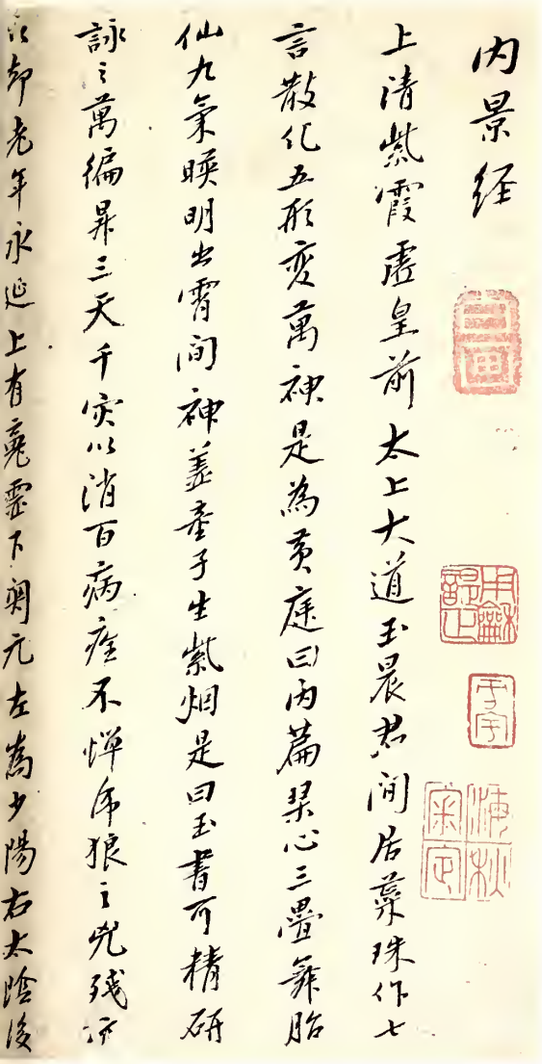


Couplet in running script, Zhu Da (1626–1705), China, Qing dynasty, 1690s, matched pair of hanging scrolls, ink on paper, 141 x 30.5 cm. Purchase—Funds provided by the F. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation in honor of the 75th Anniversary of the Freer Gallery of Art, F1998.39.1–.2

albums containing an aggregate fourteen leaves, and eleven individual album leaves). Aside from the ca. 1665 album of *Lotuses* discussed above, other works in this group date mainly to the period from 1690 to 1705, the most creative and productive years of Zhu Da's career. As above, many of the calligraphic works consist of Tang dynasty poems or other famous early texts, but they also include thirteen original poems by the artist himself. Each of the paintings is an exemplary specimen of Zhu Da's art. Together they represent most phases of his stylistic and compositional development in the hanging scroll and album leaf formats and cover a wide range of his favorite themes, including flowers, birds, animals, and, in his later years, landscapes (F1998.57).

In painting, Zhu Da developed a unique visual vocabulary full of personal symbolism and artistic gesture that make his deceptively simple works both endlessly intriguing and utterly fascinating. The lack of ornament and seemingly guileless innocence of his paintings appeal to the modern eye, but while the spontaneous, almost abstract, brushwork he employed to render these themes may outwardly seem rather playful—he clearly enjoyed using both ambiguity and verbal and visual puns in his works—many paintings also reveal a troubled psychological edge to his character and an innately stark, critical outlook on his own fortunes and the condition of the world at large. For example, his birds and other creatures often show upward-staring "white eyes," a sign for anger in the Chinese tradition (see no. 3).

As seen in these works, Zhu Da rarely used color except in his later landscapes and generally painted in pure ink on paper. Undoubtedly reinforced by his many years as a Chan monk, this practice was part of the common aesthetic among scholar-painters of the time and derives in large part from the early training that he, like all members of the educated classes, received in calligraphy. Zhu Da won the praise and admiration of his contemporaries as a calligrapher; calligraphic techniques and the effectual manipulation of brush and ink were also the foundation of his approach to painting. He developed a distinct and



6 *Inner Radiance Scripture of the Yellow Court, in standard script,* Zhu Da (1626–1705), China, Qing dynasty, 1684, two of twelve leaves, ink on paper, each 22 x 33.5 cm. Purchase — Funds provided by the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation in honor of the 75th Anniversary of the Freer Gallery of Art, F1998.29.1–.2

immediately recognizable personal style in both calligraphy and painting. And in both, the development of his brushwork generally followed the same path and direction: sharp, angular, and full of personal expressiveness in his early years; mellow and softer in his later years and characterized by a mature subtlety.

Counting by format, the combined acquisitions contain seventy-eight album leaves (twenty-six of painting and fifty-two of calligraphy), sixteen hanging scrolls (eight of each), and one handscroll (calligraphy). The Freer Gallery of Art is extremely fortunate to receive these outstanding gifts, which together form the largest and most significant assemblage of Zhu Da's works in any museum outside of China. The Freer's collection of seventeenth-century Chinese painting and calligraphy has been enormously enhanced and now has a stable center around which it can continue to build. Moreover, the exceptional quality and significance of these works, together with the additional gift of Professor Wang's research materials, make the Freer the single most important permanent center for the study and exhibition of Zhu Da's works outside China.[3]

Joseph Chang and Stephen D. Allee

NOTES

1. Major collections of Zhu Da's art can be found in the Shanghai Museum, the Palace Museum in Beijing, and the Bada Shanren Memorial Hall in Nanchang, the artist's birthplace. Although many fine individual works appear in various public and private collections elsewhere, no individual museum aside from these three could compete in breadth, depth, or overall significance with the private collection assembled by Wang Fangyu.

2. See Wang Fangyu, comp., *Bada Shanren lunji* (An anthology of essays on Bada Shanren), vol. 1, text (Taibei: Committee for Compilation and Examination of the Series of Chinese Classics, National Institute for Compilation and Translation, 1985), and vol. 2, plates (1986), which contain reprints of forty-nine articles on Zhu Da by various authors, including thirteen articles by Wang Fangyu. See also Wang Fangyu, Richard M. Barnhart, and Judith G. Smith, ed., *Master of the Lotus Garden: The Life and Art of Bada Shanren (1626–1705)* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), which also includes a partial list of articles by Wang Fangyu in the bibliography, pp. 288-89.

3. Although his art was generally neglected during the Qing dynasty, interest in Zhu Da has been on the rise in the twentieth century both in China and in the West, and over recent decades he has been the subject of numerous important studies. An international symposium on Zhu Da's life and art was held in 1986 at the artist's birthplace in Nanchang, where a refurbished memorial hall and collection of his works were unveiled. The conference was followed by the publication in Chinese of two volumes of scholarly essays (1986, 1988). Another international conference on Zhu Da was sponsored by Yale University in 1990, which was accompanied by the catalogue *Master of the Lotus Garden* (see note 2). A third international symposium is scheduled for Nanchang in 1999.

Bottle

China, Jiangxi Province, Jingdezhen,
Qing dynasty, Yongzheng period (1723–35)
Porcelain with cobalt decoration under colorless glaze
12.2 x 12.9 cm
F1997.41

This petite porcelain bottle with underglaze cobalt decoration was made at the imperial workshop in Jingdezhen during the reign of the Yongzheng emperor (1723–35), a period that is known for the high quality of Jingdezhen imperial wares. The bottle's graceful and spare decoration, complemented by the use of white space, was executed in the style of two earlier periods renowned for their exceptional porcelain production — the Yongle (1403–24) and Xuande (1426–35) periods of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). These reigns set the early standard of excellence in imperial porcelain and exerted an enduring influence on later ceramic design and connoisseurship.

As one aspect of a much larger phenomenon in later Chinese culture, the intentional use of archaic styles is commonly encountered in the shapes and decoration of imperial blue-and-white porcelain of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911). The archaism takes several forms. Numerous vessels, especially those of the Qianlong period (1735–95), are based on ancient bronze vessels and tend to be grand in scale. Another group that includes this bottle draws directly upon earlier blue-and-white porcelain. This intimate bottle is close in spirit to the sweetness and elegance of decorated porcelain vessels of the Yongle and Xuande periods. A lappet collar circles the low neck, while a band of overlapping lotus petals rises from the base. Six staggered sprays of auspicious flowers (in the upper tier) or fruits (in the lower tier) circle the spherical body. Similar sprays of fruits and flowers appear around the rim of a large Yongle dish in the collection of the Freer Gallery of Art (fig. 1) and inside and outside a pair of Xuande bowls (fig. 2). The cobalt used to paint these motifs carefully replicates the deep blue, irregularly mottled pigment characteristic of the early fifteenth century, whereas the six-character reign mark (two lines inside a double ring) on the base uses the pale, even blue typical of the Yongzheng period. The vessel shape, however, does not directly copy a Ming model, although its silhouette is evocative of the flattened spherical "precious moon vases" popular in the early fifteenth century.[1] The vase's smooth curves are a distinctive feature of many small-scale, Qing dynasty imperial porcelains made for display. They seem to be designed as much to satisfy the touch as to please the eye.

This bottle is closely related to the scholarly and curatorial interests of its former owner, John Alexander Pope (1906–1982), a specialist in Chinese porcelain whose career at the Freer Gallery of Art spanned almost forty years and included the directorship (1962–71). The bottle was object number 13 in Dr. Pope's collection. According to his collection record card, he purchased the piece from C. T. Loo in 1953. That was precisely the time when Dr. Pope had begun purchasing for the Freer Gallery the fine examples of fifteenth-century blue-and-white porcelain from the E. T. Chow collection that were being offered in New York. This bottle now joins those pieces to speak to continuities in imperial Chinese porcelain.

Louise Cort

NOTE

1. See, for example, the early-fifteenth-century flask with two small handles adjoining the elongated neck and another without handles in the Percival David Foundation. Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, *Imperial Taste: Chinese Ceramics from the Percival David Foundation* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1989), nos. 30 and 31. Such forms were also recreated faithfully in the Yongzheng period. Ibid., no. 51.

Fig. 1. Large dish, China, Ming dynasty, early 15th century, porcelain with cobalt decoration under colorless glaze, height 9.5, diameter 68.0 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, F61.14

Fig. 2. Bowl, one of a pair; China, Ming dynasty, Xuande period (1426–35), porcelain with cobalt decoration under colorless glaze, height 7.9, diameter 22.7 cm. Freer Gallery of Art — Purchase, F52.16

Vase with Ru-type glaze

China, Jiangxi Province, Jingdezhen,
Qing dynasty, Yongzheng period (1723–35)
Glazed porcelain, slip coating on foot, underglaze cobalt mark; wooden stand (undated)
Height without stand 27.0, with stand 30.9, diameter 13.8 cm
F1998.80

Despite its brevity, the reign of the Yongzheng emperor (1723–35) was unsurpassed in the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) for the artistry and technical refinement of porcelains produced at the imperial kilns in Jingdezhen. Among the most noteworthy accomplishments were archaistic-style vessels, some of which were inspired by the recent past (see Bottle, F1997.41) while others, like this vase, recalled a distant source. Not only is the shape of this hexagonal vase modeled on antique metal vessels, but the exquisite glaze revives the glory of Song dynasty (960–1279) imperial celadon wares.[1]

The hazy blue of the glaze, which has a grayish-green cast, closely resembles the rarest type of Song dynasty celadon, Ru ware, which has been described as the "supreme expression of the art of the Chinese potter."[2] The Yongzheng vessel also invokes some attributes of Guan ware, and to a lesser extent Ge ware, related Song dynasty ceramics in the celadon family.[3] Eighteenth-century connoisseurs could not always classify the Song celadons as precisely as modern scholars, who have benefited from experience excavating the ancient kilns.[4] Therefore, Qing imitations often show some latitude in combining features drawn from several closely associated types of celadon wares.

Archaism, or the paired concepts of "returning to the past" *(fugu)* and "imitating the ancient" *(fanggu)*, has been the genesis of most major stylistic shifts in the history of Chinese art. For Yongzheng and other eighteenth-century emperors, political motivations also encouraged antiquarianism. As an ethnic Manchu and descendant of the founders of the Qing dynasty who conquered China, Yongzheng sought to "possess" and "re-create" the past to help legitimate his rule in the eyes of the Chinese elite, whose support was essential. Since Yongzheng had a personal interest in ceramics, reviving the imperially sponsored celadon glazes of the Song dynasty must have held enormous aesthetic appeal. At the same time, the effort demonstrated his mastery of Chinese tradition and bolstered his claim to be China's rightful ruler.

Under Yongzheng, exceptionally talented supervisors were appointed to oversee the imperial kilns. Starting in 1729, when Tang Ying (1682–1756) took charge, the emperor began to direct the resurgence of the celebrated Song dynasty celadons. Never intended as slavish copies, most Yongzheng porcelains, including this vase, bear a reign mark. The legend, written in seal script, reads, "Made in the Yongzheng period of the great Qing dynasty." As an ancient style of writing, seal script was reserved for ceramics inspired by antique models. In contrast, porcelains bearing painterly decoration in new enamel colors carry a mark written in "standard script" *(kaishu)*.

Even without consulting the reign mark, subtle differences in both the glaze and shape of this hexagonal vase distinguish it from Song dynasty prototypes. Original Ru, Guan, and Ge ceramics typically have matte glazes with only a few pinholes in the surface, but the Yongzheng glazes are glossier with more numerous pits.[5] Differences can be explained partly by the use of different materials: the Song dynasty wares have grayish or dark stoneware clay bodies, but the Jingdezhen potters used white porcelain clay.

Ru ware, named for an ancient administrative district, was made for only a short period just before the end of the Northern Song dynasty (907–1127). It typicially has a grayish clay body covered by thick glaze, with or without a dense crackle. The color is classically described as pale blue sky. The kiln site has recently been identified in Baofeng County, Henan Province. These kilns ceased production around 1125 when the court was forced to move south, establishing the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279). A new type of imperial celadon modeled after Ru ware was created under the name Guan ware (literally, "official ware"). Guan ware and Ge ware both exploit more deliberate crackle and typically have darker clay bodies than Ru ware. The glaze on this Yongzheng vase is suffused with a large-scale crackle pattern, and the unglazed foot is coated with iron-rich clay slip to create the impression of a dark clay body. Both features invoke Guan and Ge wares, while the color and texture of the luminous glaze resemble Ru ware.[6]

The vase's faceted form set on a slightly splayed foot is reminiscent of Song to Yuan (1279–1368) dynasty bronze vessels, which in their own time were already considered archaistic.[7] These twelfth- to fourteenth-century vessels perpetuated features studied from ancient Bronze Age *hu* wine storage vessels, but were made as flower vases. The Yongzheng period vase preserves a feature of early metal vessels and their Song copies in the two small cutouts that appear in the foot. The curved handles, in contrast, represent an eighteenth-century innovation.

The wooden stand is another indication of eighteenth-century taste. Although it cannot be dated securely, the pedestal exemplifies an important aspect of Yongzheng's strategy for displaying ceramics. Qing emperors liked to exhibit porcelains on carved, dark wood stands, relying on their height and decoration to enhance the aesthetic qualities of the ceramic on view and set it apart from the ordinary to invite closer inspection.

A Yongzheng period vase of the same shape as the Freer's is in the National Palace Museum, Taiwan,[8] but the glaze is grayer and exhibits a dense network of large crackle. Perhaps that vase was originally intended to resemble Ru ware, but after firing, it looked more like Ge ware, so the crackle was stained a dark color. Even minor fluctuations in firing conditions dramatically affect the color and texture of celadon glazes, and the Freer's vase, in contrast, must have been deemed successful as Ru ware. This scenario underscores not only the difficulties that Song potters faced when they tried to fire delicate blue Ru ceramics but also the obstacles encountered in the Yongzheng period. While not as scarce as

twelfth-century Ru ware, which as early as the Qing dynasty was described "as rare as stars in the morning," eighteenth-century porcelains with Ru-type glaze are uncommon.

Neither Ru ware nor its Yongzheng period counterpart was represented in the Freer collection before the acquisition of this hexagonal vase. Thus by this single addition, an opportunity is created to direct attention to two peaks in the long history of Chinese ceramics — the great celadons of the Song dynasty and their eighteenth-century revivals.

Jan Stuart

NOTES

1. "Celadon" refers to a large family of high-fired ceramics. Their glazes are colored by small percentages of iron oxide. When fired in an oxygen-deprived, or reducing, atmosphere, the glazes turn variable shades of bluish green, traditionally described with the French word *céladon*. The word is commonly believed to have been derived from a seventeenth-century French drama *L'Astrée*, in which a shepherd named Céladon appeared attired in a gray-green robe. Some modern scholars prefer the term "green ware," but the poetic French name is more likely to remind a reader that celadon ceramics can exhibit a broad range of colors from sky blue to sea green.

2. James C. Y. Watt, "Antiquarianism and Naturalism," in Wen C. Fong and James C. Y. Watt, *Possessing the Past: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1996), p. 238.

3. Ge ware is the subject of considerable scholarly debate, since the kiln site has not yet been discovered. Traditionally it has been identified as one of the celebrated Song dynasty celadons. Recent scholarship reveals that most extant Ge ware actually dates to the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368), and scholars are considering whether this may prove to have been the earliest period for Ge ware.

4. Identifications of celadons were also not as precise as today. A famous example is the Qianlong emperor's (reigned 1736–95) identification of a Ru ware bowl as Jun ware, another type of Song dynasty celadon. See Rosemary Scott, *Imperial Taste* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books and Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1989), pp. 34–35.

5. Wang Qingzheng, "Yongzheng Imitations of Guan, Ge, Ru and Jun Wares," *Orientations* 22, no. 2 (February 1991): 54–59, outlines some basic differences between Yongzheng period imitations and their Song prototypes.

6. The dark foot also appears on some other Yongzheng period Ru ware imitations. Ibid., p. 54.

7. For a hexagonal bronze dated twelfth–fourteenth century, see Robert Mowry, *China's Renaissance in Bronze: The Robert H. Clague Collection of Later Chinese Bronzes, 1100–1900* (Phoenix: Phoenix Art Museum, 1993), pp. 31–35.

8. Illustrated in Liu Liang-yu, *Ch'ing Official and Popular Wares: A Survey of Chinese Ceramics* (Taibei: Aries Gemini Publishing, 1991), p. 97.

Ellsworth collection of Later Chinese calligraphy

Chinese calligraphy by 175 artists
China, Qing dynasty (1644–1911) through Republic period (1912–), 1780s–1980s
Hanging scrolls, album leaves, fans; ink on paper
F1997.42–.89
F1998.83–.294

This splendid gift from the eminent New York collector and art dealer Robert Hatfield Ellsworth quadruples the overall number of independent works of Chinese calligraphy in the Freer Gallery of Art and for the first time provides the museum with a comprehensive body of material for the study and exhibition of this vital art form as it developed over the last two hundred years. Prior to receiving this gift, the Freer owned just sixty-four independent works of Chinese calligraphy, while many of its most important examples of written art appeared in smaller formats such as album leaves, frontispieces, colophons, and inscriptions associated with paintings. Independent works dated mostly to the seventeenth century or earlier, and the broad evolution of later Chinese calligraphy, were represented by only a handful of excellent but unrelated scrolls. Through the exceptional generosity of Mr. Ellsworth, the Freer Gallery of Art has now become one of the largest repositories of Chinese calligraphy in the United States and the only one with such extensive holdings from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Mr. Ellsworth's gift includes 260 works of calligraphy by 175 artists, along with 19 attached paintings by 16 artists. While smaller formats such as fans and album leaves are well represented, the vast majority of works are hanging scrolls; almost half the total are pairs of scrolls *(duilian)*, and matched sets of four constitute another sizable group. The earliest dated calligraphy in the collection is from 1789 and the most recent from 1985. Nearly half the works were created during the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) between the late eighteenth century and 1911, while an equal number belong to the Republic period between 1912 and 1949. The collection contains outstanding or representative works by virtually all the most important and influential calligraphers during this 160-year period and also includes a small group of works from the 1970s and 1980s by selected contemporary artists living in China. Many calligraphers are represented by more than one work. In such cases, the various items are generally written either in different styles of script or in different formats, providing a wider sense of the individual artist's temperament and aesthetics and the scope of his interests and concerns.

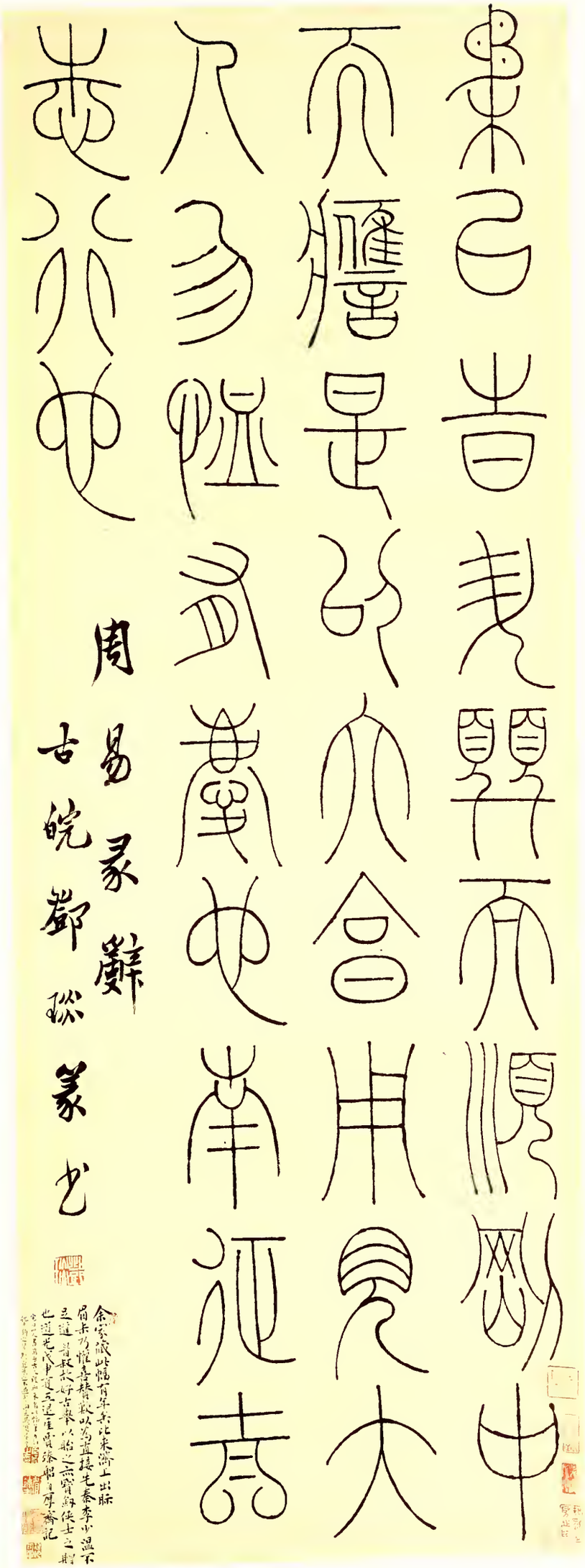
Simultaneously an art form and functional tool, calligraphy both illuminates and is illuminated by the history of the times in which it is created, uniquely preserving the sentiments, thoughts, and opinions of the artist within the immediate context of his creation. In calligraphy, as in no other form of visual expression, the personal qualities, intellectual pursuits, and aesthetic proclivities of the individual artist converge and meld and are directly revealed in his preferences of content and presentation. Not surprisingly given the range and size of the Ellsworth gift, an extraordinarily wide diversity of styles and individual interpretations of different script types are represented in this collection. These encompass traditional categories of calligraphy developed over the centuries by earlier Chinese artists, such as various styles of seal *(zhuan)*, clerical *(li)*, standard *(kai)*, running *(xing)*, and cursive *(cao)* scripts, as well as the even more ancient bone script *(jiaguwen)*, only rediscovered by archaeologists at the turn of the last century, and the eclectic and individual approaches preferred by many twentieth-century practitioners.

The calligraphers themselves represent a broad cross-section of the intellectual, social, political, and artistic elite of the late Qing dynasty and early Republic period. Among them are professional artists and gentlemen amateurs, high ministers of state and modest government officials, famous scholars and collectors, renowned teachers and educators, artists of the imperial court and those of regional prominence, Chinese nationalists and Manchu aristocrats, and many others. A fascinating spectrum of personal and social contacts is preserved here as well, for many of the calligraphers shared a profound interest in antiquarian subjects and often communicated by calligraphic example with their fellow aficionados.

The influence of these scholarly and artistic inquiries is clearly evident in both the subject matter and style of many works in the collection, whether presentation pieces, personal interpretations of established models, or private letters to friends and relatives. Moreover, within each major category of script, the wide range of examples in the Ellsworth gift allows one to follow the unbroken transmission and evolution of ideas from master to student and generation to generation, in some cases over a period of nearly two hundred years. One example is the calligraphy that derives from the study of ancient inscriptions on metal and stone *(jinshixue)*, a scholarly movement that inspired the most significant new developments in written art during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Throughout history, Chinese culture has looked to its ancient heritage for inspiration, whether in matters of personal and public behavior or in the style and content of individual artistic expression. Occasionally a more fundamental reassessment of the past, while espousing a return to pristine originality, actually led to broad-based innovation. Such was the case in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in regard to calligraphy. Although a common tradition of received models provided the main formal basis for the study and practice of calligraphy, scholarly reexamination of the distant past also served as a stimulus to new developments in contemporary art. Calligraphers took ancient forms of writing that had previously appeared only as static inscriptions on metal or stone and transformed them into highly expressive works of brush and ink, thereby establishing a new aesthetic of brushwork that in some cases attempted to recreate the "ideal" forms of

1 *Passage from the Book of Changes*, Deng Shiru (1743–1805), seal script, Qing dynasty, late 18th century, hanging scroll, ink on paper, 114.34 x 42.56 cm, Freer Gallery of Art, gift of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, F1997.47


周易彖辭
古皖鄧琮彖

ancient scripts and in other cases to imitate the erosive effects of time and weather on the hard surfaces of their original models.

In pursuit of new inspiration, some artists became engaged in studying, recording, and reproducing the inscriptions on ancient monuments, a scholarly movement known as *beixue* (the study of stela inscriptions). As models for others to emulate, such inscriptions were best known to artists and epigraphers of the nineteenth century and early Republic period through the familiar and ongoing tradition of rubbings.[1] Many calligraphers were also active seal carvers and studied the different forms of writing employed in this ancient craft.

Seal carving *(zhuanke)* as an expressive art form practiced by scholars and artists, rather than craftsmen, began in the late sixteenth century and gained in popularity over the following two centuries, with many practitioners applying their related skills to both carved and handwritten calligraphy. By the late eighteenth century two main schools of seal carving had developed, one known as the Zhe School, centered in the city of Hangzhou in Zhejiang Province, and the other known as the Wan (or Anhui) School, named for the home province of its sixteenth-century founder. Four of the eight founders of the Zhe School, commonly called the Eight Masters of Xiling, are represented by calligraphy in the Ellsworth gift, while the Anhui School can be followed through several generations, from the works of its most accomplished and influential eighteenth-century master Deng Shiru (1743–1805) to his lineal descendents in the early and mid-twentieth century.

In one scroll from the collection, Deng Shiru wrote out an edifying passage from the ancient divinatory text the *Yijing* (Book of changes) using a type of seal script developed in the Qin dynasty (221–206 B.C.) for stone inscriptions and official seals (no. 1). In the next generation, Deng's follower Wu Tingyang (1799–1870) employed a type of clerical script found on memorial stelae of the Eastern Han dynasty (25–220) to create a poetic couplet of philosophical content (F1997.57). In response to a letter from a calligrapher friend, Xu Sangeng (1826–1890) selected individual characters of clerical-seal *(zhuanli)* script from a famous but heavily damaged stela inscription of 276, known as the *Tianfa shenchan bei*, to form a new aphoristic couplet (fig. 1 and no. 2). Xu's close contemporary Zhao Zhiqian (1829–1884) borrowed the style of clerical script used on stone inscriptions from the Northern Wei dynasty (386–535) to compose a maxim in the form of a matched couplet (F1997.61). In 1917, Wu Changshuo (1844–1927) copied out the opening lines of the third "Stone Drum" poem, the text of which comes from a group of the ten earliest Chinese stone inscriptions to survive (fig. 2 and no. 3).

The final artist of this lineage is Qi Baishi (1864–1957), one of the most popular and influential painters and seal carvers of the twentieth century. In his typically rustic and highly individual style, Qi employed his interpretation of ancient seal script to write out a poem by the Tang dynasty poet Li Xin (active early to mid-eighth century) (no. 4). These and other selections from the Ellsworth gift offer many remarkable avenues for further exhibition and study.

Joseph Chang and Stephen D. Allee

PUBLISHED

All the calligraphy in this gift was published in Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, *Later Chinese Painting and Calligraphy: 1800–1950*, 3 vols. (New York: Random House, 1986), vol. 3. Note that some objects in the catalogue were not included in the present gift and that the Freer object count is somewhat different from the count in the catalogue.

NOTE

1. For several excellent examples of the kind of rubbings available to students of ancient calligraphy, see *An Siyuan cang shanben beitie xuan* (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1996), a catalogue of early rubbings from the Robert Hatfield Ellsworth collection exhibited in September 1996 at the Palace Museum, Beijing.

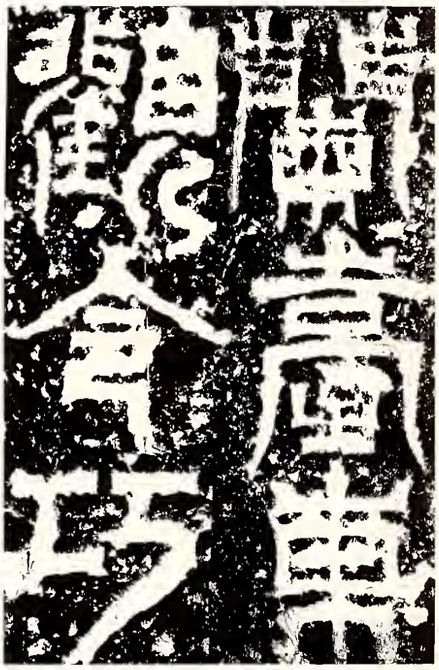


Fig. 1. Detail from a Ming dynasty (1368–1644) rubbing of the *Tianfa shenchan bei*, China, Wu kingdom, A.D. 276, clerical-seal script, collection of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth

2 *Poetic Couplet*, Xu Sangeng (1826–1890), clerical-seal script, China, Qing dynasty, 1887, matched pair of hanging scrolls, ink on paper, each 133.39 x 31.76 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, gift of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, F1997.62.1–.2

上虞小弟徐三庚褒海甫記于滬上

務穎仁兄大人法家屬雋皇象書郎稀
審定年二時丁亥三月上澣

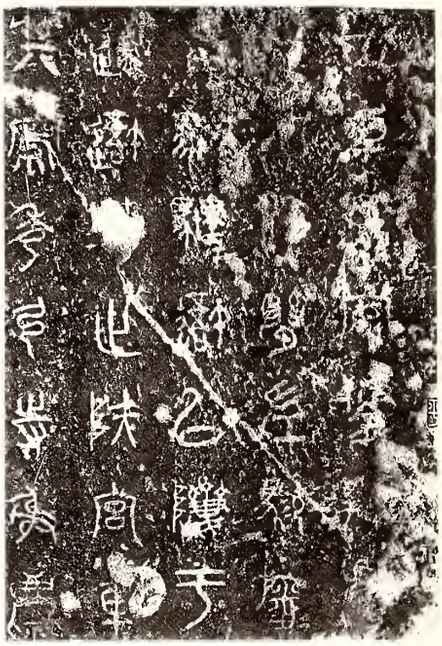
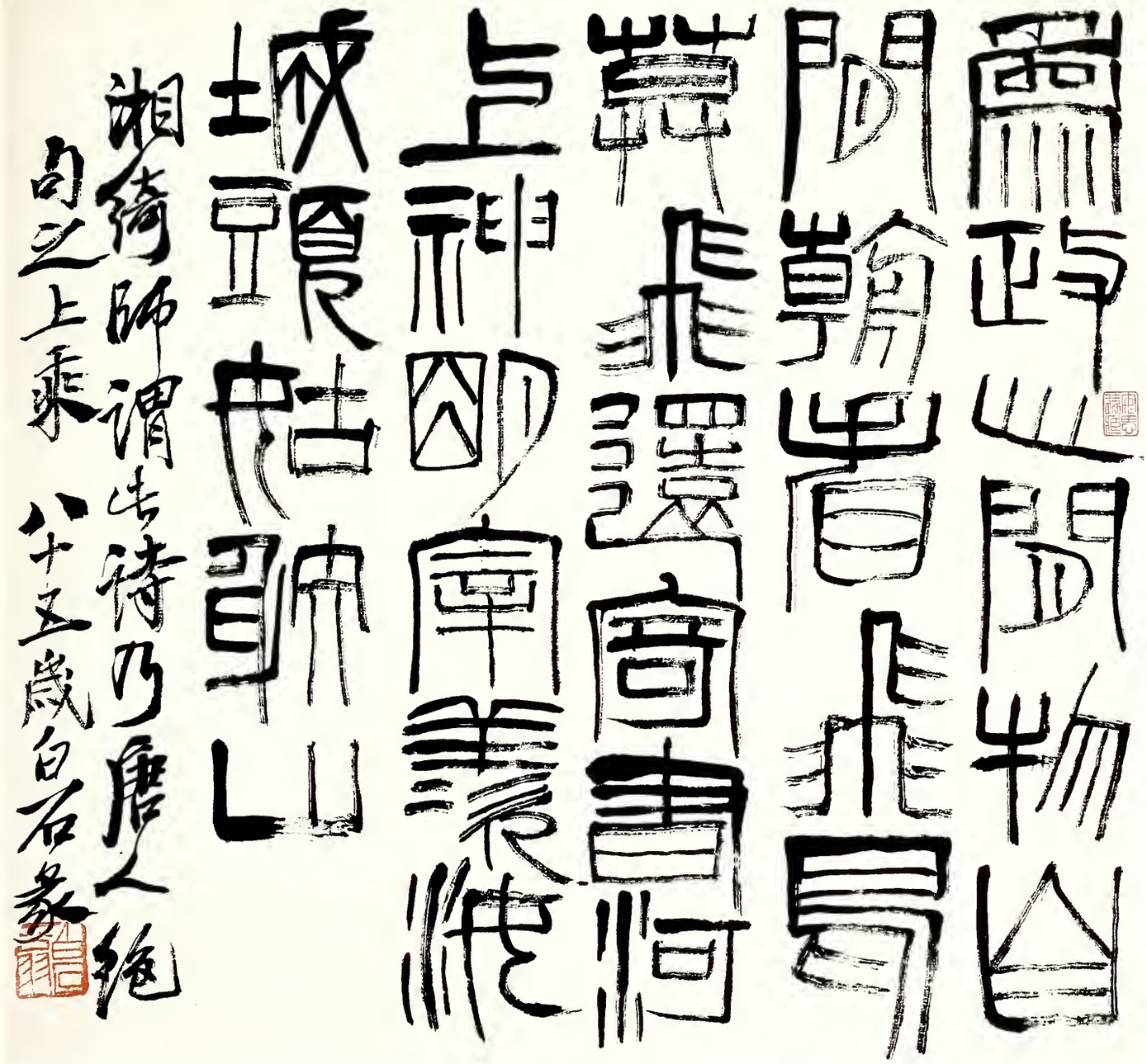


Fig. 2. Detail from a 13th-century rubbing of the Stone Drums, third drum, China, Eastern Zhou dynasty, Spring and Autumn period (770–481 B.C.), clerical script, collection of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth

3 Excerpt from the *Third Stone Drum*, Wu Changshuo (1844–1927), seal script, China, Republic period, 1917, hanging scroll, ink on paper, 147.05 x 37.95 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, gift of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, F1997.69



4 *Poem of Li Xin*, Qi Baishi (1864–1957), seal script, China, Republic period, 1948, album leaf, ink on paper, 31.76 x 31.76 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, gift of Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, F1997.87.1

Fifteen paintings by Qi Baishi

Qi Baishi (1864–1957)
China, Republic period, early to mid-20th century
Hanging scrolls, album leaves; ink on paper or ink and color on paper
F1998.60–74

The fifteen Qi Baishi paintings in this gift, consisting of ten hanging scrolls and five album leaves, were among those assembled by the late scholar and collector Wang Fangyu (1913–1997) and his wife Sum Wai (1918–1996). Professor Wang designated this particular group of paintings as part of his core collection because of their relationship to the works of Zhu Da (or Bada Shanren, 1626–1705), to whom he devoted much of his life's scholarly and collecting activities.[1] Several paintings show a marked and readily apparent stylistic affinity to the works of Zhu Da; for example, one simple painting of an orchid stem and flowers is quite close to Zhu Da in both execution and the use of space.

Qi Baishi was one of the most important and innovative Chinese painters and seal carvers of the twentieth century (see detail). The current group of paintings is generally representative of Qi Baishi's personal style and includes many of his favorite subjects: landscapes, figures, flowers, crustaceans, and animals. Until recently, the Freer collection contained no paintings by Qi Baishi and few by other twentieth-century Chinese artists.[2] These paintings therefore add a new dimension to the collection and will allow the Freer to illustrate the continuation of certain traditional styles and themes of Chinese painting into modern times.

Joseph Chang and Stephen D. Allee

NOTES

1. These fifteen Qi Baishi paintings accompany a gift of twenty works by Zhu Da also discussed in this publication. Professor Wang evaluated the influence of Zhu Da on Qi Baishi in his article, "Bada Shanren dui Qi Baishi de yinxiang" in *Bada Shanren lunji* (An anthology of essays on Bada Shanren), comp., Wang Fangyu, vol. 1, text (Taibei: Committee for Compilation and Examination of the Series of Chinese Classics, National Institute for Compilation and Translation, 1985), pp. 431–447, and vol. 2, plates (1986), pp. 207–38, plates 1–31.

2. The recent Robert Hatfield Ellsworth gift to the Freer, also discussed in this publication, includes an album-leaf painting by Qi Baishi (*Grapes*, F1997.87.2) along with four separate works of calligraphy by the same artist.

Detail of two artist seals (actual size) from *Orchid*

BEQUEST FROM THE COLLECTION OF WANG FANGYU AND SUM WAI, DONATED IN THEIR MEMORY BY MR. SHAO [illegible] WANG
[illegible] GALLERY OF ART
[illegible] NIVERSARY

Orchid, Qi Baishi (1864–1957), China, Republic period, early to mid-20th century, hanging scroll, ink on paper, image 46.2 x 42.0 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, bequest from the collection of Wang Fangyu and Sum Wai, donated in their memory by Mr. Shao F. Wang, F1998.72

Calligraphy and personal seals of Xie Zhiliu

Preface to a Collection of Seal Carvings by Wu Zijian

Xie Zhiliu (1910–1997)
China, People's Republic, 1971
Calligraphy, ink on paper
33.4 x 102.8 cm
F1998.75

Collection of seals for Xie Zhiliu

Wu Zijian (born 1947)
China, People's Republic, 1971–90
Stone and bamboo
Largest: height 6.4, width 3.8, diameter 4.0 cm
Smallest: height 2.0, width 1.3, diameter 1.4 cm
F1998.76.1–.86

This large group of 113 personal seals used by the late artist and scholar Xie Zhiliu (1910–1997) was given to the Freer Gallery of Art through the extraordinary kindness and generosity of his surviving family. All the seals were created for Xie by Wu Zijian, one of the most talented and innovative seal carvers of the twentieth century. When Wu learned of the family's generous gift to the Freer, he and his wife were similarly moved to donate a fine example of Xie Zhiliu's calligraphy that the master had written for Wu at the beginning of their relationship. Together, these two uniquely related and harmonious gifts make a marvelous addition to the museum's growing collection of objects and materials relating to the later development of Chinese calligraphy.

Xie Zhiliu was among the most esteemed Chinese painters, art historians, and connoisseurs of the twentieth century. Throughout his career, he earned great acclaim for his painting and scholarship, but his calligraphy was also widely admired, especially in his later years.[1] As a young man, Xie became deeply immersed in the works of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) artist Chen Hongshou (1599–1652) and chose to model his own painting and calligraphy on Chen's elegant but idiosyncratic style. Chen had developed a unique approach to "running" (*xing*) script, combining elements of squarish clerical script with the marked leftward slant, rounded corner strokes, and long diagonal tails of some earlier running script. These became defining characteristics of Xie Zhiliu's calligraphy as well.[2] Through the mid-1960s, however, Xie produced relatively few independent works of calligraphy, devoting his efforts primarily to writing colophons on works by other artists, both ancient and contemporary, and to composing suitably harmonious inscriptions on his own elegant paintings.[3]

Xie Zhiliu's eminence as an artist and scholar placed him in a precarious position at the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution (1966–76). Toward the end of 1967 both he and his wife, Chen Peiqiu (born 1922), herself a well-regarded painter, were arrested and confined. Xie was allowed to return home in 1969, and, although still under an official cloud, he decided both to resume his former research as best he could and to revamp the styles of his own painting and calligraphy. Xie was nearly sixty at the time.

After his release from confinement, Xie Zhiliu researched and wrote an important series of short incisive articles about calligraphy.[4] He particularly immersed himself in studying the Tang dynasty (618–907) artists Zhang Xu (ca. 700–ca. 750) and his follower the Buddhist monk Huaisu (725–785), who had greatly expanded the expressive possibilities of cursive (*cao*) script. Eventually, Xie Zhiliu settled on Zhang Xu as his preferred model and proceeded to develop the personal style of calligraphy that he practiced for the remainder of his life. From this time, calligraphy became an even more significant component in Xie's overall artistic output.[5]

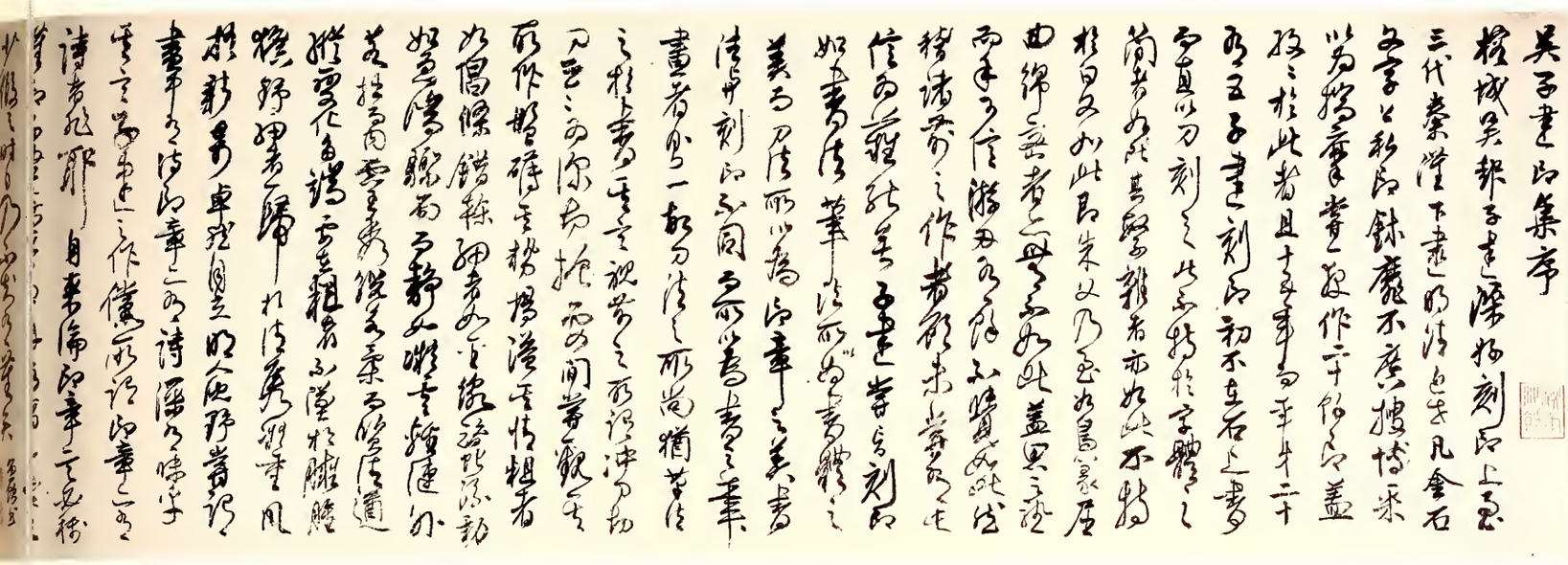
The present work perfectly captures the transitional period between Xie's former style derived from Chen Hongshou and his later style originating in Zhang Xu (no. 1).[6] Elements of Chen's calligraphy can still be detected, but far more obvious are the rounded forms and multiple series of linked characters that are associated, in this case, with the thin, vigorous cursive script of Huaisu, a style with which Xie briefly experimented before turning to Zhang Xu. Starting at far right, the title of Xie's essay is followed by thirty-one columns of text. At first, each character occupies its own space, but by column three, linkages between characters begin to appear with increasing frequency. Ranging from two to six characters, each linked series is written with a single continuous impulse of the brush and generally denotes a discrete lexical or syntactical unit, such as the binome *wenzi* ("writing" or "written forms") at the top of column three, or the set phrase *wu bu ru ci* ("there were none that were not like this") in the middle of column ten. Some columns are formed almost entirely of linked characters, such as column fifteen, where nine of the ten characters are joined into one three-character series and one six-character series. Linkages generally follow the flow of the text, ebbing and flowing in concert with the measured rhetorical pace of Xie's classical prose and subtly emphasizing or adding nuance to the meaning of his words. Xie also varied the tonalities of his ink by either stretching a load or replenishing his brush at irregular intervals. Using variable spacing between characters and alternating his brush speed between slow and swift, he created a dynamic, shifting visual balance among the columns of text that reflects the inherent tension between the natural expansiveness of cursive script and the tight structural control he sought to maintain.

Xie Zhiliu wrote this preface in 1971 for his twenty-four-year-old protegée, the calligrapher and seal carver Wu Zijian, one of the few individuals during the Cultural Revolution who openly associated with Xie following his release. Most of Xie's seals had been confiscated or destroyed in previous years, so along with two or three other young artists, Wu began to create new seals

1 *Preface to a Collection of Seal Carvings by Wu Zijian*, Xie Zhiliu (1910–1997), China, 1971, handscroll, ink on paper, 33.4 x 102.8 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, gift of Wu Zi Jian and Wu Chi Wing, F1998.75

GIFT OF WU ZI JIAN AND
WU CHI WING,
FREER GALLERY OF ART
75TH ANNIVERSARY
F1998.75

GIFT OF THE XIE FAMILY
FREER GALLERY OF ART
75TH ANNIVERSARY
F1998.76.1–.86



Preface to a Collection of Seal Carvings by Wu Zijian

A native of Rongcheng [in Fujian Province], Wu Qi, known as Zijian, has a deep passion for seal carving. Going back to the Three Ages, Qin, and Han dynasties, and down through the Ming and Qing into recent times, there is no form of writing on metal and stone, on either official or private seals, that he has not gathered and collected from far and wide and subjected to rigorous analysis. He once made more than twenty seals in a single night, for though he is only twenty-five years old, he has been unstinting in his efforts for some fifteen years.

When carving a seal, Zijian does not first write the text on the surface of the stone, but sets directly to carving it with his knife. It is not just simple characters that he creates like this, but complex ones also, and it is not just intaglio texts, but those in relief, and even the convoluted and intricate "bird script" and seal script, that he does like this as well. His hand freely executes whatever his mind has conceived, unconsciously "plying his blade with more than enough room to spare."* I have searched through all the earlier masters and no one before has ever done anything like this, so an ability such as his must truly be hard to achieve.

Zijian once said: "Carving a seal is like writing calligraphy, for just as brushwork is what makes a written form beautiful, knifework is what makes the carved design beautiful. Writing calligraphy is not the same as carving a seal, but since identical strokes are used for both, what is valued in knifework in regard to writing is just the same as for brushwork." These words penetrate the essence of what earlier commentators have said about [knifework techniques such as] slicing *[chongdao]* and incising *[qiedao]*.

On occasion I have examined Zijian's works, and there is a sense of monumentality in their design and a feeling of grandeur. His thick lines are like pliant branches or the crisscross trunks of trees, while his thin lines are like metal wires or threads of silk, sometimes moving like a dashing stream and driving rain, or quiet as condensing clouds and gentle ripples. If his carving seems clumsy on the outside, on the inside it is subtle and graceful, and what may seem flaccid in external appearance, in its inner substance is pure and vigorous. Although he shifts and changes among many styles, what is important to Zijian is that the thick lines never collapse into the grotesque or primitive and that the thin lines always create a distinct and solid design. His style is fresh and marvelous, and stands uniquely unto itself.

Shen Ye of the Ming dynasty once stated that "just as there is poetry in painting, there is also poetry in seals." He could very well have been speaking about Zijian's works, for is there indeed not poetry in his seals? Hitherto, discussions of seal carving have always praised the seals of the Han dynasty. But although Zijian is still quite young, his achievement in fact is already such that, given a little more time, no one will even think of the Han anymore. Written by Yuyin.**

Translation by Stephen D. Allee

* This quotation refers to a famous cook in ancient China, who, by following the spaces between the joints, was able to butcher the carcass of an ox with unusual rapidity and without dulling his knife. The phrase has come to refer to anyone possessing extraordinary, seemingly effortless skill and dexterity. See *Zhuangzi jishi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961), pp. 117–20, esp. p. 119; Burton Watson, trans., *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), pp. 50–51.

** Xie Zhiliu signed the preface as "Yuyin," one of the studio names he used as a sobriquet. The name frequently appears on his seals, for example the lower of the two seals following his signature here (see note 7, seal 3). Literally, the phrase means "Fish Drinking" and derives from the second of two poems entitled "Expressing My Feelings" ("Yonghuai") by Li He (790–816) of the Tang dynasty, the last two lines of which may be translated, "Do you not see the *fish* in the clear stream, *drinking* the water and doing as it pleases?" (translator's italics). For Li He's full poem, see Wang Qi, *Li He shige ji zhu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1977), pp. 47–48; for a full, annotated translation, see J. D. Frodsham, trans., *The Poetry of Li Ho* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 24.

for Xie and soon became his favorite carver. Over the years Xie continued to use these seals in varying combinations to complete many of his paintings and works of calligraphy.[7] The texts carved on the seals frequently represent one or another of Xie's many studio names, most of which derive from favorite lines of classical poetry.

Ranging in date from 1971 to 1990, the collection presented to the Freer Gallery of Art contains 113 of the seals Wu Zijian created for Xie, including 97 soapstone seals and 16 seals carved on joints of bamboo (no. 2).[8] The bulk of the seals were created during the Cultural Revolution when it was difficult to obtain high-quality stones on the market, though they appear to come from the usual sources — Shoushan in Fujian Province, and Qingtian in Zhejiang Province. All the stones have been expertly cut and polished by hand and exhibit a superb level of craftsmanship, while their discreet coloration and smooth texture radiate a modest, refined elegance.

Wu Zijian did not receive formal training in seal carving but acquired his love for the art through direct exposure at a relatively tender age. Since seals are carved in reverse, Wu taught himself as a boy to visualize characters and mentally compose complex designs in mirror image. Later, this finely honed talent allowed Wu to forgo the usual first step of tracing a design on the surface of a stone prior to carving, which in turn afforded him much greater latitude for expressive spontaneity in his compositions and knifework. Wu's passionate involvement with seal carving led him to explore the entire history of Chinese epigraphy, especially the evolution of various ancient scripts that were carved on stone or usually appear on certain kinds of metal object. The impact of this historical research is clearly evident among the seals presented to the Freer.[9]

Up until the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368), seals were usually made of metal and were accordingly executed by craftsmen. But while some individual artists may have begun to carve their own stone seals during the fourteenth century, the practice became commonplace only toward the end of the sixteenth century. Traditionally, most artists tended to emulate the stylistic and compositional structures developed during the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220), the earliest period when seals were in widespread use. However, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as interest in and archaeological investigation of the distant past intensified, several "new" styles, often based on even older forms of writing, became popular among some carvers. Wu Zijian mastered not only the various mainstream traditions of seal carving but developed an original, highly elaborate, personal style that derives in large part from the decorative "bird script" sometimes found on bronze weapons, utensils, and ritual vessels from the fourth through first centuries B.C.[10] Wu Zijian's diverse stylistic proficiency, along with his great technical skills as a carver and unique compositional approach, make him one of the most singularly fascinating masters of the later twentieth century.

Joseph Chang and Stephen D. Allee

CALLIGRAPHY PUBLISHED

Wu Zijian yin ji (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1988), cover art, and separate pagination, pp. 1–5; *Shu yu ke: Wu Zijian*, exhibition catalogue (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute for Promotion of Chinese Culture, 1987), not paginated, preface to section on seal carving; Yuan Yu, *Xie Zhilin zhuan* (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chuban gongsi, 1995), cover art, and plates 7-8 (sections).

SEALS PUBLISHED

Wu Zijian yin ji (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1988), includes eighty-seven of the present seals; *Shu yu ke: Wu Zijian*, exhibition catalogue (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute for Promotion of Chinese Culture, 1987), includes three of the present seals.

NOTES

1. For biographical information on Xie Zhiliu, see Zheng Chong, *Cong Jiyuan dao Zhuangmutang: Xie Zhiliu yishu shengyai* (Shanghai: Shanghai shuhua chubanhe, 1988); Zheng Wen, "Xie Zhiliu nianbiao," *Mingjia hanmo* 44 (September 1993): 60–87, a special issue devoted to the art of Xie Zhiliu (English translation, "Chronology of Xie Zhiliu," pp. E37–51); Yuan Yu, *Xie Zhilin zhuan* (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chuban gongsi, 1995); Thomas Lawton, "Xie Zhiliu, May 8, 1910–June 6, 1997," *Artibus Asiae* 57, nos. 3–4 (1997): 159–60. For discussions of Xie Zhiliu's calligraphy, see Han Tianheng, "Xuezhe Xie Zhiliu de shufa yishu," *Shufa* 43, no. 4 (1985): 21–23; Liu Yiwen, "Xie Zhiliu yu shufa," *Mingjia hanmo* 44 (September 1993): 46–51 (partial English translation, "Xie Zhiliu and Calligraphy," pp. E26–29).

2. For independent works of calligraphy by Xie in the style of Chen Hongshou, see *Shufa* 43, no. 4 (1985): 1, left, matched pair of hanging scrolls, couplet, dated 1946, with colophon by Zhang Daqian; *Mingjia hanmo* 44 (September 1993): E28–29, colophon to an album of paintings, dated 1954.

3. For examples of colophons by Xie Zhiliu, see *Dafengtang cang Zhao Wenmin Jiuge shuhua ce* (Kyoto: privately printed, 1958), not paginated, colophon dated 1940; *Dafengtang yizeng mingji tezhan tulu* (Taibei: Guoli gugong bowuyuan, 1983), pp. 8, 12, colophon dated 1946 (transcription, pp. 80-81).

4. For his essays on calligraphy, see Xie Zhiliu, *Jianyu zagao* (Shanghai: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1979), pp. 53–72.

5. For independent works of calligraphy by Xie in the style of Zhang Xu, see *Shufa* 43, no. 4 (1985): inside front cover; *Shupu* 78, no. 5 (1987): 13; *Mingjia moji*, comp. Zhang Hu and Zhang Yingsheng (Beijing: Zhongguo guoji guangbo chubanshe, 1987), pp. 118–19; and Yuan, *Xie Zhiliu zhuan*, nos. 1–6.

6. Few other specimens of Xie Zhiliu's transitional style have been published. For one related example, see *Shufa* 43, no. 4 (1985): 1, right,

F1998.76.43

F1998.76.42

2 (above) Selected seals from a collection of seals for Xie Zhiliu, Wu Zijian (born 1947), China, People's Republic, 1971–90, stone and bamboo, various dimensions, Freer Gallery of Art, gift of the Xie Family (back row, left to right: F1998.76.22, 76.47, 76.61, 76.44, 76.70.1–.2, 76.56.1, 76.67, 76.25, 76.46, 76.85, 76.84. Front row, left to right: F1998.76.10, 76.1, 76.45, 76.35, 76.11, 76.37)

3 (below) Selected seal impressions from a collection of seals for Xie Zhiliu, Wu Zijian (born 1947), China, People's Republic, 1971–90, stone and bamboo, various dimensions. Freer Gallery of Art, gift of the Xie Family

hanging scroll, poem by Du Fu (712–770) on the calligraphy of Zhang Xu. This undated scroll bears impressions of two seals carved by Wu Zijian in 1971 and published in *Wu Zijian yin ji* (Shanghai: Shanghai Shudian, 1988), p. 5, right; p. 10, right. Both seals are now part of the Freer collection, F1998.76.36 and F1998.76.25.

7. For example, Xie applied three of Wu's seals, all carved in 1971, to the present calligraphy. The three seals read: (1) *Mingyuchi guan* (square relief), lower right; (2) *Xie Zhi zhi xinyin* (square intaglio), lower left; and (3) *Yinyin fu* (square relief), lower left. They are published in *Wu Zijian yin ji*, p. 31, left; p. 17, right; p. 73, left. Seals (2) and (3) are now part of the Freer collection, F1998.76.14.1 and F1998.76.11.

8. Wu Zijian signed and dated all the stone seals, and several bear additional side inscriptions explaining the circumstance of their creation or the significance and derivation of their texts. Most of the stone seals date to the early period of Wu's career: fifty-one from 1971, eight from 1972, twenty-seven from 1973 (including two boxed sets), three each from 1976 and 1977, one each from 1979 and 1982, and three from 1990. Eleven of the sixteen bamboo seals were originally created for Xie in 1964 by the master carver Fang Jiekan (1903–1987), who had been Xie's primary supplier of seals prior to his incarceration, and were recut by Wu Zijian at Xie's request in 1972. At the same time, Wu contributed an additional five bamboo seals of his own design.

9. For selected examples of Wu's seals using forms of writing from the Eastern Zhou dynasty (770–221 B.C.), see F1998.76.36 and .76.24; from the Qin dynasty (221–206 B.C.), see F1998.76.25; from the Han dynasty through the Period of Division (206 B.C.–A.D. 581), see F1998.76.1, .76.3, .76.7, .76.27, .76.28, .76.31, .76.39, .76.43, and .76.72; from the Sui through Song dynasties (581–1279), see F1998.76.22, .76.47, .76.55.3, and .76.56.9; and from the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368), see F1998.76.42, .76.45, .76.67, and .76.84.

10. Bird script is an elaborate form of ancient writing that incorporates the profile heads and anatomies of birds, fish, and occasionally insects and animals, into the design of individual characters. Often difficult to read, bird script was employed exclusively for decorative purposes. For examples of Wu Zijian's various interpretations of bird script, see F1998.76.6, .76.9, .76.12, .76.27, .76.38, .76.56.1, .76.61, .76.68, and .76.85.

F1998.76.68

F1998.55.14

F1998.76.84

Hehua (Lotus)

Lois Conner (United States, born 1951)
China, Hangzhou, Zhejiang, 1995
Three platinum prints on vellum paper
S1997.144: 16.6 x 41.5 cm
S1997.145: 16.9 x 41.8 cm
S1997.146: 16.8 x 41.6 cm

In remarkably short order Lois Conner has emerged as one of the most important and influential photographers of late twentieth-century Asia. Employing the apparatus and techniques of nineteenth-century photography, her wide-ranging explorations of the Asian topography, in particular that of China, have produced deeply evocative visual meditations that also comment on the nature and meaning of the postindustrial landscape.

Hehua, a sequence of three black-and-white views photographed in 1995, represents a refinement as well as an extension of the quiet poeticism apparent in Conner's earliest work. These remarkable studies evoke with both force and grace the visual dynamism inherent in the dying forms of water plants. Decaying volumes, rendered simultaneously fluid and geometric by the ambivalence of reflection, are organized into elusive contradictions, as jagged energy and dense, whipsaw movement fracture and bend in mirrored planes of light on water. Three different compositions have yielded separate dimensions of this intersection, each framing a specific liquid angularity that oscillates between hushed, elegiac abstraction and violent tone poem. Above all, these are constructed landscapes, meticulous assemblages of collision, balance, and repose, and, as is characteristic of much of Conner's work, the presence of human forms is minor, inconsequential, and in this case, nonexistent.

The products of a distinctive artistic personality, these photographs have been implemented through a demanding, labor-intensive technical process. Introduced to photography at age nine by her father, Conner has served as an associate professor in the department of art at Yale University since 1991. A Guggenheim Foundation grant in 1984 served as the artistic and conceptual catalyst that enabled her to make the first of many extensive photographic trips to China. Counting among her influences photographers Timothy O'Sullivan (ca. 1840–1882), Eugène Atget (1856–1927), Walker Evans (1903–1975), and Henri Cartier-Bresson (born 1908), she also cites Chinese landscape painting as an inspiration. Both its subjects and traditional formats (hanging scrolls and handscrolls) resonate in her work.[1]

These formats — "an exaggerated rectangle that extends the narrative" — relate closely to her own photographic methods. Employing a panoramic, or "banquet," camera used at the turn of the century for making detailed portraits of large groups, Conner relies on long exposure times to create not only the dense negatives her printing process requires, but also to register with surprising range the often unassuming details and pale gray washes that are among her prominent stylistic markers. Much of the subtle visual and tactile quality of Conner's work — many of her Chinese compositions, for example, evoke the sense of a flat, textured object with soft dimensional surfaces — is traceable to the painstaking preparation and manipulation by hand of each sheet (sensitized with salts of iron, platinum, and palladium) on which she prints negatives without enlargement. In addition, by frequently returning to certain locales or subjects (Guilin, Guangxi Province, is a recurring interest) at different times and seasons, Conner is able to move subtly beyond the familiar, often spectacular, surfaces of the Chinese landscape and, by means of her technical strategies, identify new formal structures and relationships.[2]

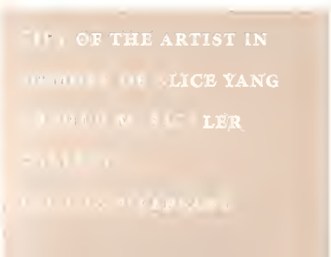
Conner's photographs as a body of work function on multiple levels. As cultural documents, they record with unwavering directness the changes, natural and man-made, that have accrued in both urban and rural Asia, whether found in the glass-and-steel monoliths of Hong Kong, the slow encroachments of nature on the ancient monuments of Cambodia, or the eternal relationships of mountain, river, and sky across the vastness of China. They clearly, however, also stand on their own as complex visual statements that require considerable time to see, analyze, and decode. *Hehua* may well represent a silent rumination on the transient nature of existence, a visual pondering of time and memory, but at the same time it serves with unexpected energy as an elegant investigation into the related perceptual dynamics of line, light, and space. While not her intention, Conner recalls earlier efforts by tapping into the calligraphic qualities of natural form that have long driven the explorations of Chinese artists. In its bewildering variety *Hehua* evokes both the wild cursive calligraphy of the Chinese Buddhist monk Huaisu (725–785) and, to a lesser extent, the strong emotionalism and spontaneity frequently found in works of the great late-Ming to early Qing dynasty individualist master Bada Shanren (1626–1705).[3] One is also tempted to cite parallels to the work of the American abstract painter Cy Twombly (born 1928) that links drawing and writing,[4] but these historical parallels and echoes are simply byproducts of Conner's own carefully considered fusion of tradition, vision, and technology.

Examples of Conner's work are found in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven; and the Chinese Photographers Association, Guangzhou, among others. *Hehua* joins a body of nearly eighty other works by the artist in the collections of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, making the gallery a major repository of Conner's work.Together with over one hundred thousand historical photographs of Asia in the archives of the Freer and Sackler, the acquisition of new photography that enhances awareness and understanding of historical and contemporary Asia has assumed an increasing emphasis.

Thomas W. Lentz

PUBLISHED
Blind Spot, no. 9 (Spring 1997).

NOTES
1. *Panoramas of the Far East: Photographs by Lois Conner*, Photographers at Work, A Smithsonian Series (Washington, D.C., and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, published in association with Constance Sullivan Editions, 1993).



S1997.145

S1997.146

S1997.144

2.See, for example, *The River Flows into the Heavens: Photographs of China by Lois Conner.* Hand-pulled photogravures by Thomas Palmer, Newport, R.I., 1988.

3. For Huaisu, see Wen Fong and James C. Y. Watt, *Possessing the Past: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei.* with contributions by Chang Lin-sheng, James Cahill, Wai-kam Ho, Maxwell K. Hearn, and Richard M. Barnhart (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art and National Palace Museum, 1996), pp. 117–20. For Bada Shanren, see Wang Fangyu, Richard M. Barnhart, and Judith G. Smith, eds., *Master of the Lotus Garden: The Life and Art of Bada Shanren (1626–1705)* (New Haven and London: Yale University Art Gallery and Yale University Press, 1991), pp. 72–75, fig. 40. I am grateful to Joseph Chang for these observations and citations.

4. See Kirk Varnedoe, *Cy Twombly: A Retrospective* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1994), figs. 23, 26, 27, 30, 78, 79.

Works by Ah Leon

Ah Leon (Chen Jingliang, born 1953)

T

Taiwan, Taipei, 1996
Stoneware with cobalt, manganese, and iron stain; porcelain nails with slip
86.2 x 82.3 cm
s1998.118a–b

Three Sketches

Taiwan, Taipei, 1993–94
Graphite on paper
21.6 x 231, 26.8 x 77, 26.8 x 77 cm
Archives s1998.9–11

Ah Leon titled this sculpture *T*, not just to refer to its shape, but as a pun on the word "tea," the focus of his early works.[1] He first studied ceramics in the late 1970s as an apprentice to master potters in Taiwan, quickly earning a reputation for Yixing-style teawares.[2] After a decade of producing only functional vessels, Ah Leon still sought a personal style, and so experimented with sculpture, ultimately creating a series of works that convincingly resemble tree branches and constructions of rough-hewn wood studded with rusty nails, including *T*. Every detail is, of course, made of clay, fulfilling Ah Leon's ambition to create a realm in which reality and illusion overlap.

Both an ardent admirer and outspoken critic of Yixing ceramics, Ah Leon's career is intimately linked to these wares. Yixing, a pottery center near Shanghai, has been famous since the late Ming dynasty (1368–1644) for teapots and scholars' accouterments made of purplish, red-brown clay. With few exceptions, the ceramics are unglazed, high-fired stoneware, the medium Ah Leon uses for his tea ceramics and large sculptural projects. In his early career, Ah Leon imitated classic Yixing teapots, improving his skills at hand modeling and molding techniques by copying antique wares. He was deeply influenced by the superlative craftsmanship of traditional Yixing teapots, which feature tight-fitting lids and perfectly balanced spouts and handles. While the playful inventiveness of some Yixing ceramics that replicate a melon, section of bamboo, or lotus seed pod also caught his attention, he was not tempted to try trompe l'oeil, favoring instead teapot designs with a sense of restrained elegance.

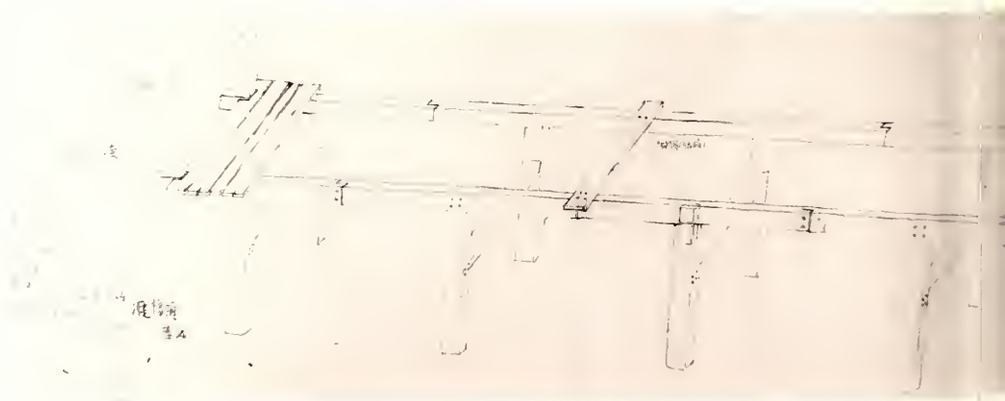
Trips to America beginning in 1986 proved to be a major catalyst. He was struck both by the expressiveness of Peter Voulkos's (born 1924) abstract ceramic sculptures of the 1950s and the astonishing realism of trompe l'oeil works by Marilyn Levine (born 1935) and Richard Notkin (born 1948). In the early 1990s, after returning to Taiwan, Ah Leon determined to revive Yixing fool-the-eye trickery by updating it. He insisted on a greater degree of mimesis than traditional Chinese potters did, for example, working on a scale close to that of the original object. His fanatical concern with hyperreal effects reflects the unrelenting close-up quality of modern life with its images seen through microscopes, X-rays, and digital cameras.

T owes its genesis to Ah Leon's monumental sculptural project *Bridge,* which premiered at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in 1997 as a temporary exhibition and is now represented in the archives collection by the artist's drawings (see below). Extending for twenty meters and close to scale for an actual footbridge, *Bridge* comprises several hundred planks, posts, beams, and nails that have to be assembled each time it is displayed. Between 1993 and January 1997, Ah Leon worked obsessively on *Bridge,* producing very little else. But near the conclusion of the project, he was inspired to distill its essence by creating the independent sculpture *T*, loosely based on a post and beam of the larger sculpture.

T's abstract form invites the viewer to examine its intricately detailed surface, deftly textured by Ah Leon when it was leather-hard. Each seeming knife stroke is actually three or four cuts carefully blended to produce the appearance of splintered planks. He developed a technique for imitating the color of naturally weathered wood by applying a stain to the clay before firing and creating a "reducing," or oxygen-deprived, atmosphere in the kiln during part of the firing.

Two preliminary drawings and the 1994 sketch of *Bridge* allow a viewer to observe Ah Leon's thought process. The diagram with writing at the left represents the starting point, when in 1993, the artist saw a fishing pier in Arkansas and challenged himself to reproduce it in clay. He listed items he wanted to imitate, including a bucket with bait, bird droppings, dried leaves, fish bones, and a water kettle to allude to human presence. Realizing that this plan was a mere exercise in representationalism, Ah Leon instead decided to fashion a bridge that could be read as a universal symbol open to interpretation on multiple levels.

When traditional Yixing trompe l'oeil wares first became popular in seventeenth-century China, authors of the day were passionately exploring the meaning of objective reality. If dream experiences, fictional characters, and painted imagery are by definition illusory and yet can become real in the mind, then as one writer said, "If we dream and it is a dream, then illusion has become real; if we dream and it is not a dream, then reality is even more an illusion."[3] Ah Leon internalizes that perspective in his explo-



GIFT OF THE ARTIST
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GALLERY
10TH ANNIVERSARY

ration of the Yixing style.

With the addition of *T* and the artist's sketches to the collection, the Sackler Gallery, which owns one of his early traditional Yixing-style teapots and a dramatic "sculptural teapot" in the form of a weathered branch from 1992, is poised to document the career of Ah Leon, who as one of the most innovative Chinese potters of the century, has made the Yixing tradition seem compellingly modern.[4]

Jan Stuart

NOTES

1. The artist's formal name is Chen Jingliang (also spelled Ch'en Ching-liang). He stopped using his surname, preferring to refer to himself by a diminutive form of his first name, "Ah Leon" (in standard "romanization," Ahliang). He signs his name either with or without the hyphen.

2. While basically traditional, some of Ah Leon's early teapots introduce innovative features, including spouts with sculptural profiles. He also earned several patents during the 1980s, as for his discovery that, by placing a teapot's air hole in a partially hollow handle instead of in the lid, pouring was improved. Moreover, by covering the hole with a finger, the flow of liquid stops instantly without any drips.

3. The quotation is from an unidentified author who used the pseudonym Zhanzhan waishi to write *Qingshi leilue* (Classified history of love), trans., Judith Zeitlin, *Historian of the Strange: Pu Songling and the Chinese Classical Tale* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 132.

4. S1997.44 and Branch Teapot, S1992.7. Ah Leon's work has been shown and collected in museums in Taiwan, the United States, and Europe, and he has presented workshops in China in Yixing. For a list of solo exhibitions and museum collections that hold his work, see Claudia Brown, Garth Clark, Jan Stuart, and David Wible, *The Ceramics of Ah Leon* (Taipei: Purple Sands Press, forthcoming).

Japan

Segment from an illustrated handscroll of *Heike kindachi sōshi*

Japan, Kamakura period, 13th century
Hanging scroll, ink on paper
Image 26.0 x 91.0 cm
F1998.300

This segment of painting and text now mounted as a hanging scroll once belonged to an illustrated handscroll *(emakimono)* in which several episodes of a narrative written by calligraphers would have alternated with paintings of the corresponding scenes.[1] The painting, delicately rendered in fine lines and ink wash, represents a courtier who plays a flute as he stands on the veranda of a palatial residence. The text, mounted to the left, describes a courtier's visit to the imperial palace where very late one night a poet named Kojijū brought him flowers. Thereupon the courtier, leaning against a pillar and splendidly dressed in blue and crimson, played his flute so beautifully that the empress dowager was overcome with emotion.

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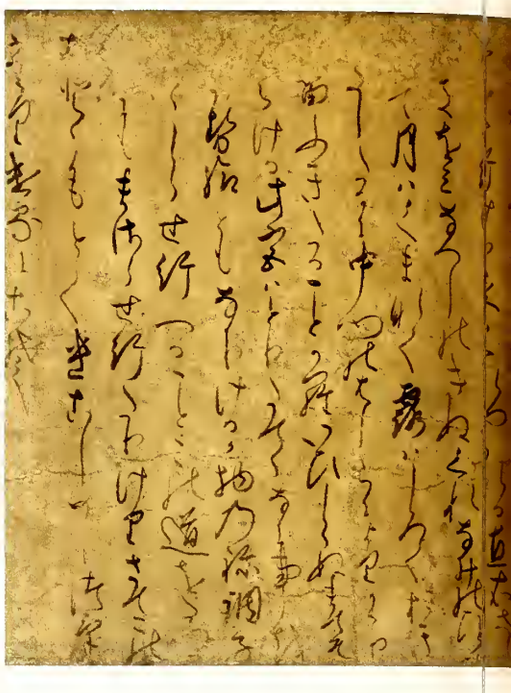
Study of its painting and calligraphy suggest that this fragment was once part of an illustrated version of *Heike kindachi sōshi* datable to the Kamakura period. The painting is extraordinarily refined in execution, and sensitive to the descriptive and emotional nuances of the text. The moon, for example, is half visible near the top of the scroll, in a band of mist, a pictorial convention in *emakimono.* According to the text, "A cloudless moon was shining, and the dew on the ground looked white with its reflection."[5] An aura of solitude and melancholy pervades the scene.

The painting is executed in the *hakubyō* manner, using mainly ink lines painted with a fine brush to produce a finished painting. Originating in Tang dynasty China, *hakubyō* painting was known to Japanese artists of the Nara (710–794) and Heian (794–1185) periods. During the Kamakura period, *hakubyō* became an effective mode for painting *emakimono,* and Japanese painters evolved a monochrome style with similar aesthetic and representational authority to that of polychrome painting. From the Kamakura period onward, *hakubyō* style *emakimono* constituted a significant mode of expression for illustrating narratives centered on the imperial court and other literary themes such as imaginary portraits of renowned court poets *(kasen-e). Hakubyō* painting in Japan evolved expressive styles that were chronologically parallel to but formally distinct from the styles of polychrome painting of similar subjects.

The painting and calligraphy of this fragment are closely comparable to several well-known examples of *emakimono* dated to the thirteenth century. The elongated proportions of the courtier's figure and the soft, voluminous rendering of his costume are comparable to the male figures in *hakubyō* handscrolls such as *Takafusakyō tsuyakotoba emaki* (Illustrated scroll of the Tale of Lord [Reizei] Takafusa) and *Makura no sōshi ekotoba* (Illustrated scroll of the Pillow Book), in particular the illustration to section 3, which shows a similar rendering of the upper garment using double lines.[6] The facial features are delineated in a conventional manner that was established in such fully colored paintings as the late Heian period illustrations to the *Tale of Genji* dated to the first half of the twelfth century, but the depiction of the face and hands of the flute player in this fragment resemble more closely the flute player in *Hazuki monogatari,* a work of the late twelfth century. The calligraphy of the text in this fragment reflects the styles of calligraphy practiced in the imperial court. The calligraphic style has many characteristics in common with one section of the text of *Komakurabe gyōkō ekotoba* (Imperial visit to a horserace)[7] and also resembles the calligraphic styles of *Makura no sōshi ekotoba.* With the exception of one detail — the particular design of the textile binding on the *tatami* covering the floor of the room behind the courtier, which is identical to that in section 1 of *Matsuzaki Tenjin Engi* (Legends of Matsuzaki Tenjin Shrine) dated 1311[8] — comparison to other examples of *emakimono* support a thirteenth-century date for the *Heike kindachi sōshi* fragment.



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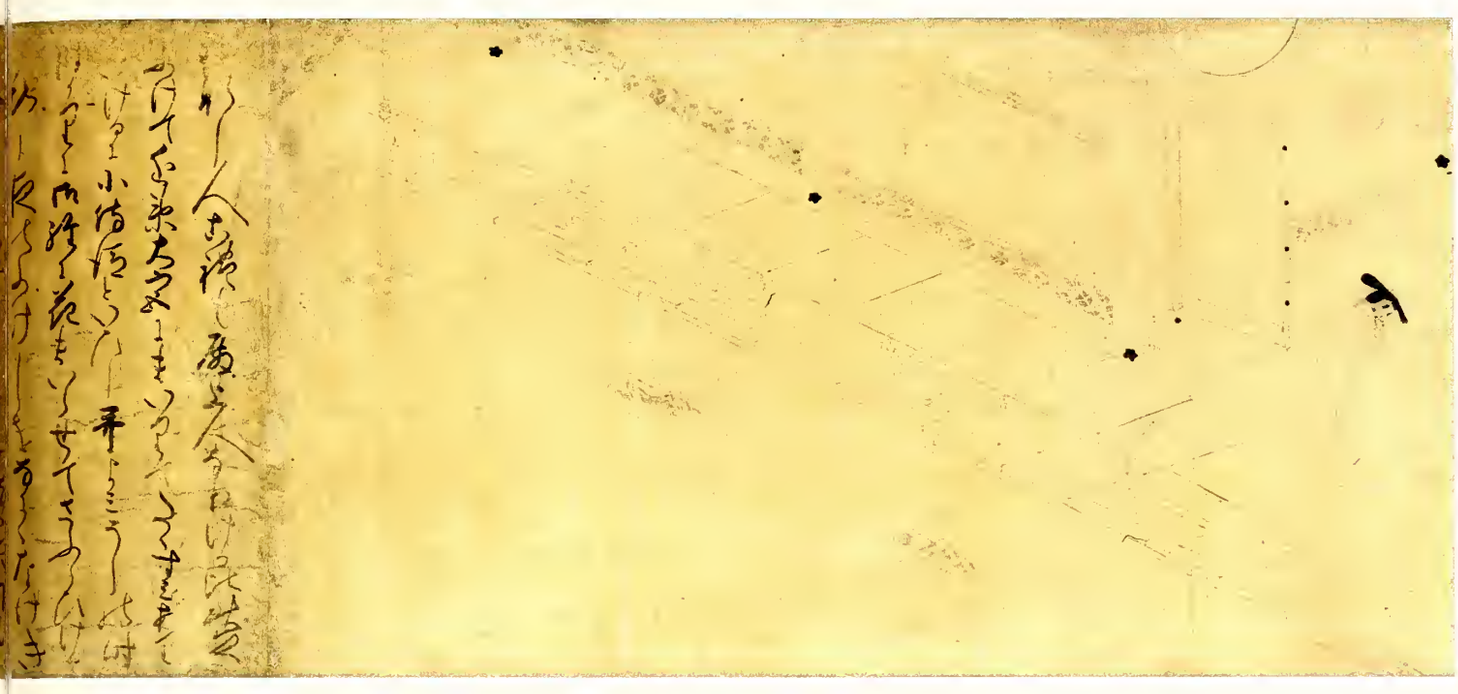
GIFT OF MR. SYLVAN BARNET AND MR. WILLIAM BURTO IN HONOR OF THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FREER GALLERY OF ART



unique illustration from a narrative for which no complete illustrated version survives. Moreover, no other fragment from the same Kamakura period version of *Heike kindachi sōshi* is known. The gift of this work to the Freer Gallery of Art thus provides a rare, early example of *hakubyō* painting for the museum's distinguished collection of *emakimono,* which range in date from the thirteenth to the early twentieth century. The painting and calligraphy of this fragment, datable by close comparison to other works to the thirteenth century, represent the earliest phase of development of *hakubyō* as an important style of painting for narratives of the imperial court. Thus, this work sheds light on the historic foundation for the later development of *hakubyō* as a distinct style in Japanese narrative painting. *Hakubyō* painting is represented in the museum's collections by three outstanding examples: a fragment of *Yūjo monogatari* (Tale of a courtesan) dated to the fourteenth century (F72.6), a handscroll of *Utatane monogatari* (Tale of a nap), dated to the sixteenth century (F61.8), and an album of the *Tale of Genji* (F32.27) by Tosa Mitsunori (1583–1638).

Ann Yonemura

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Taizōkai mandala

Japan, Kamakura period, mid-13th century
Hanging scroll; ink, color, and gold on silk
138.7 x 125.0 cm
F1998.1

In strength and opulence of rendering, the important icon seen here speaks to the power and centrality of Esoteric Buddhism during the Heian (794–1185) and Kamakura (1185–1333) periods. The imposing and luxuriously described image representing the *Taizōkai* (Womb World) mandala ultimately derives from iconography brought from China by Japanese monks in the ninth century. The multiple figures of Buddhist deities positioned in a generalized pattern of concentric rectangles offer a complex spatial rendering of an abstract spiritual concept — the potential or innate aspects of the universe. This image is usually paired with the *Kongōkai* (Diamond World) mandala, which represents the active aspects of the universe. These icons, known together as the *Ryōkai* mandala (mandala of the Two Worlds), were the focus of prolonged meditation with the ultimate goal being the initiate's realization of the unified nature of reality within *Dainichi Nyorai* (Cosmic Buddha; *nyorai* is considered an alternate epithet for Buddha).

Surely the best known of the *Ryōkai* mandalas were conveyed from China by the monk Kūkai (774–835) in the early ninth century. Two pairs of extant mandalas dating from the ninth century have been held in temples (Jingōji and Kyōōgokokuji) closely associated with Kūkai.[1] Kūkai's studies of esoteric Buddhist doctrine in China under the patriarch Huiguo (745–805) resulted in a distinctly Japanese formulation of esoteric beliefs called Shingon (literally, "true word").[2] Kūkai was a recipient of teachings and practices that had only recently arrived in China from India. These teachings reflected developments occurring from as early as the fifth century A.D., when all of India's major religious systems were attempting to express widespread philosophical trends toward an articulation of the fundamental unity of reality. Less than one hundred years separated the arrival of Indian teachings in China in 718 and Kūkai's return to Japan from China in 806. He brought with him mandala images, presumably copies of works by Lizhen (ca. eighth century) who, at Huiguo's request, gave form to dense metaphysical concepts. The images derive respectively from two sutras, the *Dainichi-kyō* and the *Kongocho-gyō*. The *Dainichi-kyō* was completed in the seventh century, while the *Kongocho-gyō* began its development then and continued to change, with subsidiary versions being added through the thirteenth century.

While Kūkai's name is most frequently associated with the establishment of mandala use in Japan, monks of the Japanese Tendai sect were also active interpreters of the Chinese schema. Residing concurrently but separately from Kūkai in China was the Japanese monk Saichō (767–822) who studied at Mount Tiantai, where the sect which bears the mountain's name was formed by Zhiyi (538–597). Tiantai was also a syncretic attempt to amalgamate the disparate Buddhist teachings. Esoteric Buddhism was one element in Saichō's course of study that also included Zen mediation and initiation into more specific Tiantai teachings that employed the Lotus Sutra as a central organizing principle. Upon his return to Japan, Saichō founded the Tendai sect, with its headquarters on Mount Hiei, at the northeast perimeter of Kyoto. While not exclusively an Esoteric belief system, Tendai realized the popularity of Esoteric teachings in Japan, especially within the imperial court, and emphasized Esoteric ritual paralleling the activities of Kūkai's new Shingon sect.

Enchin (814–891), a Tendai monk of the generation after Saichō, also traveled to China and returned to espouse a *Taizōkai* mandala type with several significant iconographic variations from the form offered by Kūkai. The mandala seen here contains iconographic features linking it with the type developed by Enchin.

In the *Taizōkai* mandala, the Cosmic Buddha is seated on the center of an open lotus blossom. On four of the eight petals are seated four other *nyorai*, who, together with the central Dainichi Nyorai, are the Five Wisdom Buddhas. On the remaining four petals are the Four Great Bodhisattvas. The central lotus blossom is surrounded by eleven halls arranged in approximate concentricity around the central hall and populated by deities ranked in descending importance relative to their distance from the center.[3]

In the Freer *Taizokai* mandala the usual indicators for Shingon or Tendai sect lineage are ambiguous. Typical of the Tendai format, we see offering or ritual tables or platforms placed before the bodhisattva *Senjū kannon* in the lower left and bodhisattva *Kongōzaō* in the lower right of the configuration of the Kokuzo-in or eighth quarter. These tables are not present in the so-called Kūkai lineage. However, another prominent iconographic variation seen in the Tendai lineage is the placement of *Hōdō Nyorai* in the north and *Tenkuraion Nyorai* in the east, reversing the positions they occupy in the Kūkai lineage mandala. However, in the Freer mandala, these two Buddhas maintain the positions usually associated with the Kūkai lineage.[4]

The Freer *Taizōkai* mandala is distinguished by excellent draftsmanship and by a complex use of materials including three distinct uses of gold: gold leaf *(kinpaku)*, patterned cut leaf *(kirikane)*, and opaque gold pigment *(kindei)*. These varieties of gold were applied to the front silk surface, and in some instances the leaf was applied to the reverse of the painted surface, giving effects ranging from lustrous to soft burnished gold. The painting is notable in its extensive use of azurite blue, a costly and highly valued color during the Kamakura period. Delinating lines are strong and consistent with some traces of underdrawing visible.

This work joins a *Ryōkai* mandala in the Freer Gallery of Art (F66.4 and F66.5), also dated to the Kamakura period though perhaps a century earlier and quite different in conception. The earlier acquisition is a pair of paintings of medium scale with the mandala structure rendered in gold paint on deep purple silk. Now, with contrasting works, both of the Kamakura period, the Freer's collection of Japanese Buddhist iconography is considerably enhanced.

James T. Ulak

PUBLISHED

Beruren Tōyō Bijutsu kan meihin ten (Masterpieces from the Berlin Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst) (Tokyo: Mainichi Newspapers, 1992), p. 104, no. 124.

NOTES

1. Yanagisawa Taka, *Kokuhō Daijiten*, vol. 1, *Kaiga* (A Dictionary of National Treasures, vol. 1 Paintings) (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1985), pp. 52–59.

2. See Ishida Hisatoyo, "Genzu mandara no seiritsu to tenkai" (The structure and use of the original mandala), in *Ryōkai mandala*, ed. Sawa Ryuken and Hamada Takashi, in *Mikkyō bijutsu taikan*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbu sha, 1983), pp. 196–207.

3. Yanagisawa Taka, "On the Ryōkai Mandalas," in *Eros and Cosmos in Mandala* (Tokyo: Seibu Museum of Art, 1978), not paginated.

4. Izumi Takeo, "Taizōkai mandara zu," in *Beruren Tōyō Bijutsu kan meihin ten* (Masterpieces from the Berlin Museum für Ostasiatische Kunst) (Tokyo: Mainichi Newspapers, 1992), p. 105; and correspondence (1996) with Yoshitaka Ariga, Tōhoku University, Sendai, Japan. For an excellent discussion of another *Taizōkai* mandala in a private American collection, see John M. Rosenfield and Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis, *Journey of the Three Jewels: Japanese Buddhist Paintings from Western Collections* (New York: Asia Society, 1979), pp. 76–79. The central lotus and petals do not represent the standard compass directions; in Buddhist iconography, the left-most petal represents the north, and top-most, the east.

Storage jar

Japan, Ishikawa Prefecture, Suzu, Suzu kilns, Kamakura period, 14th century
Stoneware
Height 48.0 cm
F1998.79

This broad-shouldered jar, which appears to sway on its small base, preserves the irregular volume and texture and the deep gray coloration created by the processes of its manufacture.

The jar, made at the Suzu kilns, exemplifies a major medieval Japanese ceramic mode that is almost entirely unrepresented in non-Japanese collections.[1] The collecting of medieval Japanese ceramics since the 1960s, even in Japan, has focused on the reddish-toned wares made at regional kilns such as Bizen, Shigaraki, and Tamba, which became well known through their later production of tea ceremony utensils and which have operated continuously to the present day. Accordingly, when archaeological investigations of medieval ceramics began in the 1930s, kiln sites were easily discovered in the vicinity of the modern centers. This initial evidence gave rise to the concept that "Six Old Kilns" (including also Seto, Tokoname, and Echizen) were responsible for medieval production. Production of the deeply textured, charcoal gray wares of medieval kilns such as Suzu, by contrast, was confined to the first half of the medieval period; rediscovery of such kiln sites forgotten in isolated mountain areas has depended on accident, and new discoveries continue to be made. A total of some eighty medieval kiln sites have now been identified, putting to rest the "Six Old Kilns" concept as a viable description of regional ceramic production in medieval Japan.

Archaeologist Narasaki Shōichi, the preeminent scholar of historical Japanese ceramics, has defined two major categories of medieval Japanese wares. One developed out of the technology associated with early ash-glazed wares produced at Sanage (*shiki*-type medieval wares), and includes Seto and Mino glazed wares, Tokoname unglazed wares (fired in neutral or oxidizing atmosphere, producing the warm reddish coloration of the clay surface), and wares from other regional kilns that adopted Tokoname technology, including Echizen. All these are represented in the Freer collection. The second major type developed out of the technology used for Sue ware, the gray, unglazed stoneware introduced from the Korean peninsula in the fifth century. Potters at some of these Sue-type medieval kilns, exemplified by Suzu, used Sue-derived techniques of forming, and they continued to fire with a reduction process (feeding fuel at a pace that exhausted the available oxygen in the kiln) that produced a gray color on the surface of the finished product.[2] Other kilns in this Sue-related group, including Bizen (see Bizen storage jar, F1998.25), Tamba, and Shigaraki, shifted eventually to a more fuel-efficient firing procedure — evidenced by the reddish tone in the fired clay — that enabled production to continue. Depletion of firewood probably was a major factor in the demise of kilns such as Suzu.

The Suzu kilns are located near the tip of the Noto peninsula, which stretches into the Japan Sea off the northern coast of Honshu above Kanazawa.[3] Until the kilns were discovered in the 1950s, extant Suzu pieces were confused with Sue ware. To date, just fifteen kiln sites have been identified, all located in the foothills around the port city of Suzu. The products — mainly jars, vats, and mortars typical of medieval production — were transported by coastal ship and are distributed at sites along the Japan Sea coast as far north as Hokkaido, as well as throughout the northern half of the Noto Peninsula. Datable evidence suggests that Suzu ware production began by the mid-twelfth century and wound down by mid-fifteenth century.

This jar was made from clay that had been cleaned only of gross impurities, leaving many stones that burst through the surface during firing. The potter began by constructing a standard mortar shape, attaching coils of clay to a clay disc, then throwing on a slowly revolving wheel. In a series of steps, allowing for drying in between, the potter added more coils to build up a jar form, ending with a finished narrow neck (which defines this vessel as a *tsubo*, or storage jar). After further drying, the potter worked over the entire surface, holding a smooth anvil (perhaps a stone) against the inside of the wall while striking a wooden paddle (carved with parallel grooves arranged on the diagonal) against the outside of the wall, meeting the anvil. Working around and up the wall with a regular repetition of strikes, he both thinned and expanded the wall to produce a vessel that was sturdy yet light for its volume. The carved paddle left repeated imprints of diagonal grooves that at first glance appear to be a continuous spiral but which can be seen to consist of independent imprints whose edges feather off and which constitute, overall, a regular checkerboard grid of such strikes. On the shoulder just below the neck, the potter incised a short vertical line, perhaps for the purpose of distinguishing his work when fired in a shared kiln.[4]

The potter was not experienced enough to produce an evenly-balanced form, so the volume thus created leans precariously to one side. Nonetheless, the jar survived the firing (during which ochre-colored wood ash settled into the grooves on its shoulder), as it survived (with neck intact) continuous use in unknown rural contexts, probably fermenting sake or storing tea leaves or unhusked rice. For all those centuries its users must have taken pleasure in touching its dry, rutted surface.

Louise Cort

NOTES

1. A smaller Suzu jar (height 33 cm) is in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (R1990.8).

2. The reduction firing process deposited carbon in the pores of the clay body, helping to make the vessel water tight. Professor Narasaki's awareness of the representative position of Suzu ware in Japanese medieval ceramics is reflected in the title of his book *Seto — Bizen — Suzu* (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1976).

3. A discussion of Suzu ware based on archaeological evidence appears in Yoshioka Yasunobu, "Kaga Suzu" (Kaga and Suzu), *Nihon chūsei* (Japanese medieval period), ed. Narasaki Shōichi in *Sekai tōji zenshū* (Ceramic art of the world), vol. 3 (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1977), pp. 242–49 and chronological chart. Socioeconomic aspects of the Suzu kilns are discussed in Yabe Yoshiaki, "Tōji chūsei hen" (Ceramics, medieval volume), *Nihon no bijutsu* (Arts of Japan), no. 236 (January 1986): 45–52.

4. A range of such "potters' marks" appears on Suzu vessels, but the single vertical line appears on jars of various dates, raising the question of its purpose.

PURCHASE
FREER GALLERY OF ART
ANNIVERSARY

Storage jar

Japan, Okayama Prefecture, Imbe, Bizen kilns, Muromachi period, 15th century
Stoneware with natural ash glaze
Height 50.5 cm
F1998.25

This massive jar is a handsome example of the utilitarian stoneware jars, vats, and mortars made in Bizen Province at one of the many regional kiln complexes operating throughout Japan during the Kamakura and Muromachi periods (twelfth–sixteenth centuries), Japan's "medieval" age. The special significance of medieval Bizen ware arises, however, from the ware's distribution to markets in urban centers including Kyoto and Nara, where pieces were noticed by cultured people involved in the formative phase of the tea ceremony.

Together with jars from the Shigaraki kilns, Bizen jars of this type and date became a major icon in the evolution of the Japanese ceramic aesthetic. They mark the unprecedented acceptance of such ceramics into the increasingly esteemed realm of the tea ceremony, where Chinese ceramics previously had prevailed. A letter written in the late fifteenth century by a pioneering tea practitioner, Murata Jukō (1423–1502), to his student articulates this new attitude. Jukō underscores the importance of the "dissolution of the boundary line between native and Chinese" in one's choice of tea ceremony utensils. In the language of poetry criticism, he praises the "chilled and withered" mood of Bizen and Shigaraki jars (used as tea-leaf storage jars).[1] Arising from this "discovery" of Bizen and Shigaraki jars, the appreciation of unglazed or naturally glazed stoneware vessels has been a distinctive and enduring trait of Japanese ceramic taste.

The Freer collection includes a fine fifteenth-century Shigaraki jar (F82.29), but its representation of Bizen ware has been limited to a group of Edo period pieces exemplifying a later and drastically transformed style of thinly thrown tableware. Few examples of medieval Bizen wares are in American museum collections.

This storage jar is formed from thick coils of dense brown clay whose undulating contours, not completely smoothed away, are still visible. The short, narrow neck was shaped so that it could be sealed effectively with a wooden plug or a paper or cloth cover secured with cord. The high, rounded shoulder is ornamented with a wide band of an irregular lattice design incised with a comblike tool. This incised band, in the form of either lattice or wavy line, is found on many Bizen jars of the same time frame, although its meaning beyond decoration — if any — is not understood.[2]

Gray wood ash landed on the upward-facing surfaces of the neck and shoulder. In areas that became hotter during the long firing, the ash melted to form olive green or mustard brown "natural" ash glaze that runs in several long drips down the body to the flat base. In some cases, the incised lattice bands channeled the drips. The jar was made at one of the kilns operating in the mountains surrounding the modern town of Imbe in Okayama Prefecture, the former Bizen Province, from which the ware takes its name.

Louise Cort

NOTES

1. Jukō's letter is translated in Dennis Hirota, comp. and ed., *Wind in the Pines: Classic Writings of the Way of Tea as a Buddhist Path* (Fremont, Calif.: Asian Humanities Press, 1995), pp. 195–98. Hirota discusses the language of "chilled and withered," as developed by the Japanese linked-verse poet Shinkei (1406–1475), as forerunner to the aesthetic vocabulary of *chanoyu* in ibid., pp. 37–73. For a discussion of the inclusion of Shigaraki and Bizen ceramics in the domain of tea utensils, see Louise Allison Cort, *Shigaraki, Potters' Valley* (Tokyo and New York: Kodansha International, 1979), pp. 104–82.

2. Other ornamented Bizen jars are illustrated in *Cordes de feu: Mille ans de céramique japonaise à Bizen* (Okayama: Sanyō Shinbun, 1997), nos. 3 (two straight horizontal combed lines; fourteenth century), 4 (undulating line framed between straight lines; fourteenth century), 5 (two tiers of undulating lines alternating with straight lines; fifteenth century), 11 (undulating line; sixteenth century). Nos. 3 and 11 were excavated from cemeteries, where they had been used as cinerary urns.

PURCHASE
FRIENDS OF ASIAN ARTS
AND FUNDS DONATED
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[illegible] CONTEMPORARY
[illegible]
[illegible]

Peggy and Richard M. Danziger, collectors and users of tea utensils, have chosen nine remarkable objects associated with the Japanese tea ceremony *(chanoyu)* that bring to the Freer Gallery of Art a new possibility of representing the special nature of such objects, which consist not only of the things themselves, with their intrinsic histories of production and patronage, but of the associated physical evidence of their use and ownership within the realm of tea. The cherished tea utensil nests in a package constructed over time, including cloth wrappers and storage bags, one or more wooden boxes, and documents inscribed on paper, on wooden storeroom tags, or on the containers themselves. It bears the imprint of the taste and training — as well as the literal fingerprints — of its succession of past owners and users, who share cumulative responsibility for its present condition and aura.[1]

From such objects does the host planning a *chanoyu* gathering make harmonious and fitting choices of a hanging scroll of calligraphy or painting and an object for display in the tea room as well as the range of utensils required for preparation of tea. Such a selection is termed a *toriawase.* The Danziger gift, while not a *toriawase* in the narrow sense, is a thoughtful selection of important tea objects representing the period of time, from the early sixteenth through early seventeenth century, when *chanoyu* evolved from a minor element of entertainment focused on the display of Chinese treasures to become an intimate and highly directed social activity transcending all boundaries in its accommodation of objects for display or use as utensils, as well as acquiring its deepest resonances as a spiritual discipline.[2] The Danziger utensils bear witness to the actions of past participants in the inventive evolution of *chanoyu,* including some of the most influential masters, who created these objects through collaboration with skilled artisans or even by personal action, as in the carving of a tea scoop, by the commissioning of something dramatically new or by the creative rescue of something old.

For the first decade or more after Charles Lang Freer began acquiring Asian ceramics in 1893, he made the majority of his purchases from Japanese dealers during his trips to Japan or from the American and European branches of Japanese firms. He thus encountered — and developed a preference for — the modulated, monochrome coloration of ceramics used in Japan for *chanoyu,* including Korean, Southeast Asian, and Chinese wares as well as Japanese, although he does not seem to have been interested at all in the practice of *chanoyu.*[3]

Although we can assume that most of Freer's acquisitions — paintings and lacquers as well as ceramics — once included, as a matter of course, the boxes and other packaging that helped define their nature, over time almost all these furnishings were lost.[4] Fortunately the nine scrolls, lacquers, ceramics, and other tea utensils described here retain their physical contexts and, through them, the resonance of their personal histories. The Danziger gift presents a grounding point for the larger group of *chanoyu*-related objects within the Freer collection. The tea room with its momentary *toriawase* becomes a gathering place for memories of creation, ownership, and enjoyment, challenging the museum gallery to do the same.

Louise Cort

NOTES

1. The process of the creation of a *chanoyu* utensil is discussed in Louise Allison Cort, "Looking at White Dew," *Chanoyu Quarterly,* no.43 (1985): 36–48, and "The Kizaemon Teabowl Reconsidered: The Making of a Masterpiece," *Chanoyu Quarterly,* no. 71 (1992): 7–30.

2. The development of *chanoyu* is eloquently discussed in Dennis Hirota, comp. and ed., *Wind in the Pines: Classic Writings of the Way of Tea as a Buddhist Path* (Fremont, Calif.: Asian Humanities Press, 1995), pp. 21–130.

3. The major exception to this preference in ceramics was Freer's fascination for the ornamented wares of Ogata Kenzan (1663–1743) and other pottery related to the colorful painting style termed Rimpa.

4. The tension of purpose between private collections of tea utensils and public museum collections, even in Japan, is discussed in Takeuchi Jun'ichi, "Museums and Tea Utensils," *Chanoyu Quarterly,* no. 76 (1994): 7–13.

Landscape

Sōen (active late 15th–early 16th century)
Japan, Muromachi period, late 15th century
Hanging scroll, ink on paper
Overall 105.0 x 47.0, painting 24.8 x 34.0 cm
F1998.19

This *Landscape* requires the viewer's attentive engagement to comprehend its elusive representation of mountain, mist, air, and water. A steep bank at the edge of a marshy lake and an empty footbridge reaching across water to a bank are suggested rather than delineated by a few swift, broad brush strokes. Empty space is as significant as the marks left by the painter's brush.

The highly abbreviated and abstract technique employed in this landscape painting and known in Japanese as *haboku* (literally, "broken ink"; in Chinese, *pomo*) was introduced to Japanese artists through paintings by the Chinese Southern Song (1127–1279) artist, Yujian (fl. mid-thirteenth century). The term "broken ink" describes several techniques of breaking the even tonality of the paper or an area painted in lighter ink wash with contrasting dark ink tones.[1] In the late fourteenth-century, Japanese painters such as Zen Buddhist monk Yūe Gukei (fl. 1361–75) began to incorporate elements of Yujian's techniques into their work.[2] A number of *haboku* landscape paintings that reflect distinct interpretations of the technique survive from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, suggesting that the technique was popular at that time, especially among Zen Buddhist artists for whom this style of painting evoked Buddhist concepts of the illusory nature of matter and the senses.[3]

This evocative painting was conceived and painted by a Zen Buddhist monk. His signature, "Sōen hitsu" (brush of Sōen) is written over his seal, which may read "Josui" (like water).[4] Sōen received his training in Zen Buddhism at Engakuji, a monastery in Kamakura. In the mid-1490s he traveled to Yamaguchi, where he studied painting under Sesshū (1420–1506), the leading Japanese painter at the time. When Sōen was ready to return to Kamakura in 1495, Sesshū presented him with a landscape painting in the *haboku* technique, now a registered National Treasure in the Tokyo National Museum, which he inscribed to Sōen.

Sōen's few surviving landscapes, including this example, reveal his mastery of the *haboku* technique as practiced by Sesshū. The best-known *haboku* landscape by Sōen, which was inscribed by the artist with a Chinese poem,[5] closely follows the format and brush techniques of the Tokyo National Museum landscape painting that Sōen had received from Sesshū. In contrast, this *Landscape* displays a more personal style. Here Sōen emphasizes curving sweeps of the brush rather than the straight, sharp brush strokes favored by his teacher. Sōen's *Landscape* evokes a quiet, intimate mood, rather than suggesting, as does Sesshū's work, a parallel to the disciplined concentration of the mind in the practice of Zen meditation.

These qualities of this *Landscape* by Sōen were entirely harmonious with the Zen Buddhist context for which it originally was created, but they also suited it for display in the alcove *(tokonoma)* of a small room for tea ceremony. The *tokonoma* and the objects and flowers presented in or around it are a focal point for the guest who receives a bowl of tea prepared by the host. Sōen's *Landscape* cannot be apprehended in one glance. Its simple, sparse composition invites the kind of leisurely and thoughtful contemplation that the slow, quiet ritual of the tea ceremony encourages. The *Landscape* calls upon the viewer to imagine being in a distant, natural setting far from the mundane world that has been left behind upon entering the tea room. Mounted with silks in subdued blue and brown tones, the painting reflects the understated aesthetic qualities favored for tea display.

This gift extends and enhances the Freer Gallery of Art's important collection of ink paintings of the Muromachi period (1333–1573) to include a fine example of a *haboku* landscape by an important disciple of Sesshū. Paintings by Sōen are few, and this *Landscape* is the first work in the Freer Gallery to represent the artist. Its acquisition enhances the gallery's strong representation of paintings by Sesshū, which include a pair of landscape screens (F58.4 and F58.5) after the style of the Chinese Southern Song painter Muqi, a single landscape screen (F05.20),[6] and a pair of screens of *Flowers and Birds of the Four Seasons* (F53.94 and F53.95). With the gift of Sōen's *Landscape*, the Freer Gallery's Japanese collection now includes the work of two important disciples of Sesshū. The Freer Gallery previously acquired a handscroll of landscapes along the Yangtze River (F70.29)[7] and a hanging scroll of a *Gibbon* (F1996.18) by Shūgetsu Tōkan (1440?–1529) who, like Sōen, traveled to study with Sesshū and later returned to his native province, Satsuma.

Ann Yonemura

PUBLISHED

Tanaka Ichimatsu and Nakamura Taniō, *Suiboku bijutsu taikei*, vol. 7, *Sesshū, Sesson* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1973), fig. 70, p. 124.

NOTES

1. Paintings by Yujian, which survive only in Japanese collections, reflect two contrasting styles of using the broken ink technique; both influenced Japanese artists. See Richard Stanley-Baker's detailed note in Yoshiaki Shimizu and Carolyn Wheelwright, eds., *Japanese Ink Paintings in American Collections: The Muromachi Period* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 129–30, note 10.

2. A pair of landscapes by Yūe Gukei reflecting the style of Yujian are in the Tokyo National Museum collection.

3. Sherman E. Lee, in *Circa 1492*, ed. Jay A. Levenson (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1991), p. 390, proposes that paintings in this style are "congruent with Chan [Zen] methods of meditation and elucidation—silence often interrupted by terse, sometimes rude, and always enigmatic and problematic explanation."

4.This small, rectangular seal appears on the best-known of Sōen's paintings, a vertical format landscape in ink on paper with the artist's inscription of a poem in Chinese. The painting is published in Matsushita Takaaki, *Muromachi suibokuga* (Muromachi ink painting), vol. 1, fig. 45 and note 45.

5.Ibid.

6. The other screen of an original pair is in the Nara City Museum.

7. Shūgetsu is said to have accompanied Sesshū to China, a rare and valuable experience for a painter of the late fifteenth century.

Poem by Fujiwara Teika

Attributed to Emperor Go-Yōzei (1571–1617, reigned 1586–1611)
Japan, Momoyama period, late 16th–early 17th century
Tanzaku mounted on a hanging scroll; ink, color, gold, and silver on paper
Tanzaku mounted on a hanging scroll; 36.0 x 5.3 cm
F1998.23

This richly decorated *tanzaku*, or paper strip with inscribed poetry, evokes scores of ancient Japanese paintings in which the *tanzaku* are depicted hanging from the branches of blossoming cherry trees or in the turning leaves of autumn maples. These paintings recollect the sites of seasonal poetry-viewing parties during which *tanzaku* were affixed to foliage.

Popular since the thirteenth century as a format for calligraphed poetry, *tanzaku* were frequently decorated by dyeing techniques that produced wavy patterns in blue and purple at the upper and lower extremities of the paper. This pattern, called *kumogami* (cloud pattern) or *uchigumori* (pounded cloudiness), is seen in the upper portion of this work.[1] Cloud patterns and silhouetted autumn flowering grasses rendered in gold and silver paint (now darkened from oxidization) form the elaborate setting for this rendering of a poem by Fujiwara Teika (Sadaie, 1162–1241).

Typical of most poems rendered on *tanzaku*, this work is unsigned. Three connoisseurial attestations accompanying this work—two enclosed papers and the box inscription *(hakogaki)*—are consistent in their attribution to Emperor Go-Yōzei.[2] Comparison with the relatively numerous examples of Emperor Go-Yōzei's hand suggests no anomalies. The well-known *Seven Imperial Poems* in the Imperial Collection, Tokyo, for example, provides an excellent chronological and stylistic range featuring seven imperial hands using *tanzaku* format, a contribution by Go-Yōzei.[3]

Brushed with confident speed in the "grass script" or cursive *(sōsho)* manner, Go-Yōzei's adaptation of a standard Shōren-in style suggests a trend most forcefully developed by his contemporary Hon'ami Kōetsu (1558–1637), that is, a rather dramatic modulation of brush stroke between thick and thin. Shōren-in, a temple within the aegis of Enryakuji, the mother temple of the Tendai sect located on Mount Hiei to the northeast of Kyoto, had been associated with excellence in calligraphy since the time of its seventeenth abbot Son'en (1298–1356). Son'en developed a synthesis of Japanese aristocratic and current Chinese styles characterized by fluidity and favoring an asymmetric placement of text on the writing surface. His stylistic type and its variants became the dominant school of Japanese writing style. By the early seventeenth century, the Shōren-in school was the equivalent of an academy or official style. Great calligraphers of the early seventeenth century, such as Hon'ami Kōetsu and Shōkadō Shōjō (1584–1639), successfully innovated what had by then become a stale and formulaic approach. Go-Yōzei's calligraphy gives some hint of the even bolder reactions to the academic style being produced outside the court.[4]

The poem, submitted in 1206 by Fujiwara Teika (1162–1241), one of three verse offerings on the theme of lamentation, finally appeared in anthologized form in 1265, some years after Teika's death. It may be translated:

Like the dew
That clings for life
On shinobugusa
So I, too, rely on you,
Though I may vanish.[5]

The invocation of Teika's spirit by Go-Yōzei seems thoroughly appropriate. From the late sixteenth century, in a process surely encouraged by increasing national political stability, the previously dwindling fortunes of the imperial family were revived through intermarriage with families of the ruling warlords. Cultural circles in and outside of the court attempted a creative retrieval of a normative and halcyon past. A central figure in that past was Fujiwara Teika, who had provided intellectual and aesthetic direction for the great surveys of Japanese literature. His interpretations and editions of ancient works, including *Tales of Ise* and the *Tale of Genji*, became the authoritative window through which the literature and wider culture of the Heian period (795–1185) were viewed by succeeding generations. In the early seventeenth century, calligraphy attributed to Teika's quite idiosyncratic hand was much sought after by practitioners of the tea for display in the *tokonoma* (alcove) during the tea ceremony. Similarly, his verse rendered by contemporaries was also desirable. His spiritual presence on such occasions added the imprimatur of one of the great arbiters of taste.[6]

Go-Yōzei seemed to relish the traditional imperial role of scholar and cultural impresario, a court function endorsed by the new military rulers, who had reduced the political status of the emperors. During his reign an important venue for imperial activity in the arts was established with the creation of the Hachijōnomiya line, later known as the Katsuranomiya family, which proved to be the most vital force for patronage of the arts in Kyoto for more than a century.[7] The Freer collection is richly endowed with examples of calligraphy by the townsman, Hon'ami Kōetsu. Now, the inclusion of a work by Emperor Go-Yōzei, a virtual contemporary, expands our appreciation of the aesthetic revolution catalyzed by the interaction of disparate social classes in Japan during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. As well, the *tanzaku* significantly enhances the Freer's growing ensemble of calligraphy, painting, and objects used in the tea ceremony.

James T. Ulak

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ARTHUR M. SANZIGER
FREER GALLERY OF ART
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John M. Rosenfield and Yoshiaki Shimizu, *Masters of Japanese Calligraphy: 8th–19th Century* (New York: Asia Society Gallery and Japan House Gallery, 1984), pp. 25, 209; Carolyn Wheelwright, ed. *Word in Flower: The Visualization of Classical Literature in 17th Century Japan* (New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1989), pp. 19, 109.

NOTES

1. John M. Rosenfield and Yoshiaki Shimizu, *Masters of Japanese Calligraphy: 8th–19th Century* (New York: Asia Society Gallery and Japan House Gallery, 1984), p. 70.

2. The two paper documents are by Kohitsu Ryōsetsu (1632–1676) and Kawakatsu Sōkyū (dates unknown), a follower of Kohitsu Ryōmin (1645–1701), son of Ryōsetsu. The latter bears a date of 1701. The inscription on the inside of the box cover is by Tanaka Kaidō (dates unknown) of Osaka.

3. Ann Yonemura, et al., *Twelve Centuries of Japanese Art from the Imperial Collections* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1997), pp. 78–79.

4. Rosenfield and Shimizu, *Masters of Japanese Calligraphy,* pp. 80–81.

5. Ibid., p. 209. With permission of the Japan Society Gallery © 1984. Also noted is the fact that the poem inscribed by Go-Yōzei was one of three submitted to the imperial court in 1206. An anthology, *Soku kokin waka shū* (Anthology of ancient and modern Japanese verse continued), containing this poem was completed in 1265. *Shinobugusa*, or hare's foot fern (*Davallia mariesii*), is an autumn plant. Edward Kamens notes that the full phrase in this poem is *yosuga no shinobugusa* or "delicate fern" and refers to a young child entrusted to the care of another by a parent contemplating his own demise. See notes by Kamens in Carolyn Wheelwright, ed., *Word in Flower: The Visualization of Classical Literature in 17th Century Japan* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Art Gallery, 1989), p. 109.

6. Edward Kamens, "The Past in the Present: Fujiwara Teika and the Traditions of Japanese Poetry," in *Word in Flower,* ed. Wheelwright, p. 19.

7. Ohta Aya, "The Tradition and Transmission of Imperial Culture in the Early Modern Period: The Collection of the Former Katsuranomiya Family," in *Essays: Twelve Centuries of Japanese Art from the Imperial Collection,* ed. Ann Yonemura (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1997), p. 44.

Photo by Schecter Lee

Box for *tanzaku*

Japan, Momoyama period (1573–1615)
Lacquer, gold, and silver on wood
Height 7.7, width 7.7, length 35.0 cm
F1998.21

The striking style of this box was very popular in Kyoto lacquerware beginning in the late sixteenth century. Objects with similar decoration are termed Kōdaiji *maki-e* after the mortuary temple Kōdaiji, built in 1605 in Kyoto by the widow of the powerful warrior and arts patron Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598) to honor her husband's memory. *Maki-e* (literally, "sprinkled design") describes a variety of decorative techniques that employ gold and silver particles or leaf in lacquer designs.The style that came to be termed Kōdaiji *maki-e* is now known to have antedated the establishment of the Kōdaiji, but it set a fashion that dominated lacquerware produced in Kyoto in the early decades of the seventeenth century.

The decoration of this box shows the diagonal divisions that are characteristic of Kōdaiji *maki-e*. Similar divisions into two fields with contrasting background colors were also used by textile designers and painters of the Momoyama period. Contrasting designs that are freely composed and not precisely repeated fill the areas divided by a zigzag diagonal gold line. In one field on the top and sides of the box, flowering plants associated with autumn — chrysanthemums on the lid and bellflowers on the sides — are depicted against a black background. Small, circular dewdrops cling to the plants. The other field has a reddish "pear-skin" background, known as *nashiji* in Japanese because of its similarity to the speckled skin of a ripe pear. Stylized crests in chrysanthemum, paulownia, and floral designs enliven this field. It is possible that one or more of these designs identified ownership of the box. The shape of this box suggests that it might have been used to store a valuable scroll of painting or calligraphy, or *tanzaku*, rectangular papers that were often decorated with color, gold, and silver and used to inscribe a single Japanese poem.

Two features of the design are somewhat unusual for Kōdaiji *maki-e* of this period. One is the low-relief treatment of certain motifs, such as the chrysanthemum blossoms, and the other is the use of silver inlay on some of the motifs on the lid. These features, typical of Japanese lacquer of the earlier Muromachi period (1333–1573), may be seen as a somewhat conservative or retrospective feature of the decoration, which otherwise follows contemporary trends in lacquer design around 1600. A Kōdaiji *maki-e* box for writing equipment *(suzuribako)* in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery (S1993.3a–d) has similar stylistic characteristics.

This box adds another handsome example to the Freer Gallery of Art's distinguished collection of Japanese lacquer and presents a close technical parallel to the Sackler Gallery's *suzuribako*. The box will complement other pieces of Kōdaiji *maki-e* in the Freer Gallery, such as a *tebako* (box for a woman's personal items) in the inaugural gift of Charles Lang Freer (1854–1919) (F07.106), a scroll box acquired in 1959 as the container for a handscroll (F59.19),[1] and two lacquer hand drums *(ō-tsuzumi)* (F80.196 and F80.197).

Ann Yonemura

NOTE

1. Articles on the *tebako* and the handscroll box in the Freer Gallery of Art are published in Ann Yonemura, *Japanese Lacquer* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1979), pp. 18–19; see also plates 3, 7.

Freshwater jar for the tea ceremony (*mizusashi*)

Japan, Okayama Prefecture, Imbe, Bizen kilns, Momoyama period, ca. 1590–1605
Stoneware with natural ash glaze, black-lacquered wooden lid
Height 11.0, diameter of rim 21.0–23.5, diameter of base 16.5 cm
F1998.17

Made in the regional pottery center of Imbe, where farmer-potters had produced Bizen ware jars (see Bizen jar, F1998.25), vats, and mortars for centuries, this mortar-shaped vessel, bearing a square seal impressed in the interior, represents the full realization of native taste and purpose in Japanese ceramics: both its form and its function (as a tea ceremony utensil) spring from a wholly Japanese context. The potter who made this vessel participated in the related process whereby, in late-sixteenth-century Japan, artist-potters emerged from among the artisans working at regional kilns, including Bizen.[1] Intense interest in ceramics on the part of *chanoyu* participants created professional potters whose products responded to, or even led, urban taste, with merchants acting as the links who disseminated tea styles and gathered the products of rural kilns into their shops. By the late fifteenth century, utilitarian Bizen-ware jars had been identified by urban connoisseurs as worthy of adaptation for use as tea utensils, augmenting the existing range of imported Chinese ceramics. Beginning around 1550, Bizen potters began making utensils explicitly for tea use. Within just a few decades, the potters (in collaboration with their clients) departed from the imported models and moved boldly into a previously unexplored domain of massive, sculpted volumes marked with a vocabulary of eloquent gestures. These new vessels, seen now as the classic ceramic forms of the Momoyama period (1573–1615), flourished from the 1590s to circa 1620, by which time the pendulum had begun to swing again in the opposite direction, toward lightness, refinement of touch, and controlled elegance (see Ninsei jar, F1998.8ab.).

While embodying the Momoyama sense of playful deformation and rough embellishment, this vessel incorporates a deliberate reference to the mass-produced mortars on which its shape is based. The kitchen mortar (*suribachi*), with broad base, conical walls scored inside with combing, and heavy reinforced rim, was used universally for grinding soybeans, sesame seeds, and other staples, and for blending sauces. Bizen mortars were famous for never breaking, even if hurled by an angry cook. Because the kilns were located within easy reach of transport via the Seto Inland Sea, the large market for Bizen mortars and other wares extended from the Kyoto region to the western coast of Kyushu.[2] With the addition of black-lacquered wooden lids, some Bizen *suribachi* were adapted for use as freshwater jars; one is said to have been owned by the important early tea master Murata Jukō (1423–1502).[3]

Potters making kitchen mortars worked quickly, pulling the clay swiftly into shape. This *mizusashi* reveals the same easy familiarity in the handling of the clay, although its maker's manipulation goes beyond mere necessity to mark and deform the plastic clay—the personalizing process (*sakui*) Japanese connoisseurs admired. A circular pad of clay, pressed down on the center of the wooden wheel head, forms the base. The potter used field clay, fine-grained and greasy in texture. He attached a coil of clay well inside the edge of the base and pulled it up into a bowl with rounded walls, leaving behind horizontal throwing rings and ending with a thick, upright rim, cantilevered over the wall just like a *suribachi* rim. Turning the wheel with the vessel still in place, the potter used his index finger to draw five vertical marks on the wall, approximately equally spaced but eccentrically curved. Then he pulled the rim outward in three places, creating a roughly triangular plan. Finally, in the center of the bottom of the vessel, he impressed a square seal bearing an illegible mark seemingly derived from a Chinese character. (The identity of that seal is key to understanding this vessel and the environment that generated it.) While the vessel was fired slowly for close to two months in a long kiln, wood ash piled up thickly against one wall and in one corner of the interior, reflecting the direction of the draft in the kiln. The bare clay flushed reddish brown, while it appears charcoal gray where it was protected by ash that has flaked off.[4]

The emergence of native tea ceramics, particularly of unglazed ones, to replace the imported glazed wares that had been the mainstays until that point, is central to the development of the austere form of tea known as *wabicha*, which shifted the emphasis from proud display of costly imported utensils to the spiritual values embodied in more modest pieces, especially native wares with their echoes of rustic farm pottery. The earliest indication of this process at Bizen kilns is a group of dated vases whose inscriptions show they were made for dedication to local Buddhist temples. Their severely plain forms and smooth, dark surfaces imitate costly bronze vases and imported Chinese celadons.[5] Minimal deposits of natural ash on these vessels suggest that they were sheltered intentionally at the back of the kiln or inside a larger vessel during firing. This marks an emerging concern for control of firing effects that had theretofore been wholly accidental.

The oldest extant Bizen wares commissioned specifically as *mizusashi* also date from mid-century; like the temple vases, their forms show that imported vessels served as models. They include a *mizusashi* named Seikai, once owned by Takeno Jōō (1502–1555), a prominent tea figure from the port city of Sakai, and a cylindrical hanging flower vase owned by another Sakai man, Kitamuki Dōchin (1504–1562).[6] The first mention of a Bizen *mizusashi* in the diary of a tea ceremony practitioner appears in 1549; the *mizusashi* was used together with a Bizen *kensui* (small container for waste-water used to rinse the tea bowl).[7] Early references to Bizen *mizusashi* call them by names relating to the shapes of imported metal vessals (Chinese or Southeast Asian) used as tea utensils, indicating the continued importance of foreign models for validating their forms and patinas. During the 1560s, the variety of Bizen tea utensil shapes noted in tea diaries expanded rapidly to include tea caddies, tea bowls, and lid rests, indicating growing interest in unglazed

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Bizen versions of the full range of tea utensils theretofore available only as glazed ceramics.[8]

A large, cylindrical Bizen temple vase dated 1557 already shows the potter's manipulation of the plain, wheel-thrown form using a sharp bamboo blade.[9] In the decades that followed, this approach, increasingly exaggerated, came to characterize Bizen tea utensils. By the 1590s, the typical Bizen *mizusashi* was a thick cylinder with swollen base and rim, projecting paired lugs, aggressively sculpted walls, and lines incised into the walls with a force sufficient to deform the vessel shape further. Moreover, such pieces were positioned for firing in the front of the kiln, where they accumulated thick crusts of gray wood ash (which sometimes melted to ocher glaze). Most water jars of this type have matching clay lids *(tomobuta)* that fit into their sunken mouths; the first mention of such a Bizen *mizusashi* occurs in a tea record of 1587.[10] Vases of this period have a similar scale and bulk, and three-sided vases are common.[11] Finally, such vases and *mizusashi* usually bear marks incised into the base or interior wall — geometric marks of the sort also found on some utilitarian jars, Chinese characters, or ciphers (used as official signatures).[12] The Freer *mizusashi* fits into this group, although its distinctive square seal sets it apart.

Incised marks, which also appear on tea ceramics made at other Japanese kilns in the 1590s, formerly were explained as potters' marks used to distinguish wares fired in a communal kiln, until one scholar proposed that they were instead marks of the merchant-middlemen who commissioned them and who dealt with potters at more than one kiln. The earliest evidence for this hypothesis came from identical marks found on both Mino and Shigaraki tea wares excavated from the Kyoto shop site of a silk importer and antique dealer who lived on Sanjō Street in the early seventeenth century.[13] In 1590, construction of a bridge over the Kamo River at Sanjō Street had turned Sanjō into a major commercial artery. The layout of the area was reconfigured in the same year, and slightly later maps show it as Pottery Quarter, a center for merchants selling ceramics. In 1988, another excavation further east along the same street uncovered a stash of Bizen and Shigaraki tea wares in quantities indicating that they were a dealer's stock rather than tea utensils collected for personal use. The deposition of these ceramics can be dated quite precisely as sometime after the reorganization of the district in 1590 but no later than 1605.[14] Impressions of the same square seal used on the Freer Bizen *mizusashi* appear on three Shigaraki pieces from this site — a *mizusashi* and two ceramic *mizusashi* lids.[15] Although not deciphered, the abstracted, scriptlike marks on the seal are described as a *kigō* or merchant's logo.

Whereas other "potters' marks" or "dealers' marks" are incised discreetly on the bases of ceramics, however, the large square seal is impressed (not once but twice) on the excavated Shigaraki water jar, as on the Freer piece, in a conspicuous place — in the bottom, where it would be most visible as the vessel was in use, filled with water, for preparation of tea. Impressions of the same square seal are also recorded on other Bizen wares — on the interior of a cylindrical *mizusashi* and (again impressed twice) on the inner wall of a hanging vase.[16] The handling of the other Bizen pieces is close enough to the Freer jar to suggest the work of a single potter, although the seal must be that of a commissioning merchant or perhaps even a different sort of person. Around the same time that the square seal was impressed on these Bizen and Shigaraki pieces, a round seal bearing the Chinese character "Raku" was impressed (in its first recorded use) on a ceramic incense burner in the shape of a Chinese lion-dog also bearing the maker's incised name, Tanaka Sōkei, and a date of 1595. This seal is said to have been presented to Sōkei by the warrior ruler of the nation, Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598), who enjoyed bestowing his approval on outstanding Kyoto craftsmen; the character "Raku" in this literal "seal of approval" is said to come from the name of Hideyoshi's palatial Kyoto residence, Jūrakudai.[17] The impressed Raku seal sits proudly on the breast of the lion-dog, not hidden under its belly with the maker's signature. Thus the prominent seal on the Freer *mizusashi* and the related Bizen and Shigaraki tea wares may be thought of as possibly the insignia of an important patron of the day, whose identity remains to be discovered.[18]

Only one other Bizen *mizusashi* resembles the Freer's *suribachi*-related form, and its similar conception suggests the work of the same potter. The bowl sits on a wide, flat base with projecting edge; vertical finger lines mark the carinated walls, and the rim is pressed (rather than pulled) into three lobes, creating a foliate form. The *mizusashi* was excavated from another site in Kyoto just a few blocks south of the one that yielded the marked Shigaraki pieces, on a plot of land once occupied by a Jōdō-sect Buddhist temple named Daiun'in. It was found among the personal belongings of a cultured abbot or other temple inhabitant, including everyday utensils along with Mino and Karatsu tea bowls, a Chinese blue-and-white porcelain incense container, and a Chinese enameled porcelain dish.[19]

The Freer water jar is an important marker for a moment of transition when impressed seals of connoisseurs replaced incised marks, just as professional potters replaced farmer-potters at rural kilns. The introduction of impressed seals on privileged ceramics in the 1590s is the forerunner to the widespread adoption of such seals by potters in Kyoto and elsewhere in the seventeenth century (see Ninsei jar, F1998.8ab). The inaugural seals confirm the centrality of the urban market and the growing importance of the authenticated "choice" of leading tastemakers. They are related to the contemporaneous practice of tea masters who wrote their ciphers in red lacquer on the bases of objects they liked and to the growing importance of box inscriptions identifying ownership. In this instance, the seal's impression directly in the fresh clay indicates a close collaboration between maker and connoisseur.

This vessel is folded in a padded square of white homespun cotton and housed in an old paulownia wood box with the lid inscribed "Old Bizen *mizusashi* with wide mouth." The inscriber is not identified. That box is contained in a new, black-lacquered paulownia-wood box and a wrapper made of Indian block-printed cotton.

Louise Cort

NOTES

1. By the fifteenth century Imbe potters were organized into production groups under the management of several men who owned the kilns. In the mid-sixteenth century, production became concentrated in three clusters of "great kilns" (roughly twenty-five meters long) located to the south, north, and west of Imbe village. Tea wares were fired in relatively small quantities among the mainstays of mortars and jars of varying sizes. Hayashiya Seizō, "Bizen Ware," in *Momoyama Period 1*, ed. Mitsuoka Tadanari and Okuda Naoshige, in *Sekai tōji zenshū*, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1977), p. 136. The reorganization of the Bizen kilns needs to be considered in relation to the rise of tea wares as a new product for a new market.

2. Makabe Tadahiko, "Bizen Kiln Sites and Excavated Findings," in *Momoyama Period 1*, ed. Mitsuoka Tadanari and Okuda Naoshige, p. 176. A coastal ship loaded with over one hundred mortars that sank in the Seto Inland Sea during the Momoyama period was excavated in 1940. Ibid., p. 179 and plate 123.

3. Hayashiya Seizō, "Bizen Ware," p. 162. Such *mizusashi* were termed *raibon* in diaries of tea ceremonies; the name first appears in a record for a tea gathering in 1539, although the ware is not identified. "Matsuya kaiki," in *Sadō koten zenshū*, ed. Sen Sōshitsu, vol. 9 (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1957), p. 3.

4. Clay selection and processing, vessel forming, and firing, as practiced by modern Bizen potters (carefully attempting to recreate Momoyama procedures) are described by Kaneshige Sōzan, "Bizenyaki no gihō," in *Momoyama Period 1*, ed. Mitsuoka Tadanari and Okuda Naoshige, pp. 253–60.

5. Ibid., plate 357 (vase dates 1512), plate 362 (vase dated 1569).

6. Ibid., plates 2–3, 126–27. Compared to utilitarian Bizen jars, these pieces (like the inscribed vases) are made from clay processed to remove pebbles and sand and thrown relatively thinly.

7. "Tennōjiya kaiki," in *Sadō koten zenshū*, ed. Sen Sōshitsu, vol. 7 (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1959), p. 13.

8. The first mention of a Bizen tea caddy occurs in 1566 ("Tennōjiya kaiki," p. 127); of a Bizen vase in 1567 (used by Sen no Rikyū [1521–1591], ibid., p. 137); of a Bizen tea bowl in 1568 ("Matsuya kaiki," p. 71); in 1576 a Bizen bowl is listed specifically for use in preparing thin tea, while a Chinese *tenmoku* bowl is used for more formal thick tea ("Tennōjiya kaiki," p. 252); in 1571 of a Bizen lid rest (ibid., p. 173). Notably, all these usages occurred in Sakai, center at that time of innovative tea practices.

9. Ibid., plates 1, 361.

10. "Sōtan nikki," in *Sadō koten zenshū*, ed. Sen Sōshitsu, vol. 6 (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1956), p. 181.

11. One Bizen three-sided vase is said to have been owned by Sen no Rikyū. *Momoyama Period 1,* ed. Mitsuoka Tadanari and Okuda Naoshige, plate 128.

12. A range of such marks (not including the mark found on the Freer piece) is given in ibid., pp. 275–76.

13. Fujioka Ryoichi, *Shino and Oribe Ceramics* (Tokyo and New York: Kodansha International and Shibundo, 1977), pp. 156–58.

14. Horiuchi Akihiro, "Momoyama no hakkutsu chatō," *Tankō* 42, no. 8 (August 1988): 46–47. The site also yielded Mino wares dating to 1580–1605 but none of later styles. The first recorded use of a Shigaraki *mizusashi* with matching clay lid occurs in 1598 at a gathering in Fushimi, the castle town south of Kyoto at the confluence of the Yodo and Takase Rivers. Louise Allison Cort, *Shigaraki, Potters' Valley* (Tokyo and New York: Kodansha International, 1979), pp. 164–66.

15. *Rakuchū shutsudo no Momoyama tōki* (Momoyama ceramics excavated in Kyoto) (Tōki City, Gifu Prefecture: Tōki-shi Mino Tōji Rekishikan, 1991), nos. 72–74. The relationship of the seals on the Shigaraki pieces to identical ones on Bizen pieces has not been discussed before in print.

16. *Momoyama Period 1,* ed. Mitsuoka Tadanari and Okuda Naoshige, plate 140. (The same mark is said to be found on "a number of other large *mizusashi* of this shape.") Musée national de Céramique, á Sévres, *Cordes de feu: Mille ans de céramique japonaise á Bizen* (Okayama: Sanyo Shimbun, 1997), no. 47.

17. Michael R. Cunningham, *The Triumph of Japanese Style: 16th-Century Art in Japan* (Cleveland, Ohio: Cleveland Museum of Art with Indiana University Press, 1991), no. 93.

18. The stamped rather than incised mark is definitely urban and refined in character. Other stamped marks are also known on Bizen wares of approximately the same date as the Freer water jar. A five-petal flower stamp appears on the outside of a famous Bizen cylindrical vase named Zangetsu as well as on an oval tea bowl excavated from the 1988 Kyoto site. *Momoyama Period 1,* ed. Mitsuoka Tadanari and Okuda Naoshige, plate 133; Horiuchi Akihiro, "Momoyama no hakkutsu chatō," plate 1, pp. 44–45. A horseshoe-shaped seal is found on a Bizen cylindrical water jar from the same site as well as on several heirloom pieces. *Rakuchū shutsudo no Momoyama tōki,* no. 62; *Momoyama Period 1,* ed. Mitsuoka Tadanari and Okuda Naoshige, plate 8 (the text mentions another *mizusashi* of the same type with the same seal); ibid., plate 9 (the matching clay lid to this piece bears a hand-incised cipher).

19. *Rakuchū shutsudo no Momoyama tōki,* nos. 64, 84, 87.

Black Seto (Setoguro) tea bowl

Japan, Gifu Prefecture, Mino kilns,
Momoyama period, ca. 1580–1605
Light gray pottery with black glaze
Height 27.5, diameter of rim 12.5,
diameter of foot 4.8 cm
F1998.15

From the very invention of the glazed ceramic "tea bowl" in China, concurrent with the introduction of tea drinking, it was made consistently as a conical form, opening outward from a narrow base to a wide mouth, following the centrifugal force of the spinning potter's wheel.[1] The tea bowl forms and characteristic glazes that were developed during the Song dynasty (960–1279) reached Japan together with the Song style of preparing powdered green tea whisked with hot water in the drinking bowl, and this manner of tea drinking became the basis for the Japanese tea ceremony, or *chanoyu*. As kilns in the adjacent ceramics centers of Seto and Mino began making glazed tea bowls for an expanding market, their products mirrored the established shapes and colors of Chinese bowls, notably the Jian ware brown- or black-glazed conical bowl with incurving rim, termed *temmoku* in Japan. In Japanese *chanoyu* practices, the *temmoku* tea bowl, presented on a lacquered wooden stand or square of silk brocade, became permanently associated with the offering of tea to persons of high status and authority in political and religious institutions.

This deep, broad, asymmetrically contoured cylindrical Black Seto bowl represents a radical departure from such notions of appropriate shape, size, and finish for tea bowls. Most notably, the bowl's shape almost entirely denies the role of the potter's wheel in forming it. The piece was certainly thrown; the clearest evidence is found in the center of the flat bottom of the bowl, in the spiral opening from the center that was left by the potter's fingers pulling out the mass of clay into a hollow cylinder. The gentle undulations of the bowl's rim also preserve the contours created by pulling up and thinning out the clay cylinder, because the potter chose not to even out the edge. Greater visual and tactile impact results, however, from the manner in which the bowl's cylindrical wall was drastically altered as soon as it was thrown. The potter used his thumb and fingers as tools: first to press a wide channel into the wall, spiraling slowly up the wall as the bowl on the wheel revolved clockwise, then to continue the rising line of the indentation by pressing a finger against the inside of the wall, forming a raised welt of narrower width that reaches

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nearly to the rim. The base of a classic tea bowl would have been symmetrically trimmed on the revolving potter's wheel. By contrast, as soon as this bowl was dry enough to handle, the potter turned it over and used a sharp bamboo blade to cut out a foot ring that only approximates a circle. He also used the blade to pare three long strips of clay from around the edge of the base, as well as to cut several vertical slices from the wall.

Before firing, the bowl was dipped into iron- and manganese-rich glaze, leaving most of the base bare. In the kiln, the bowl was positioned near a porthole in the side wall where it could be observed through the flames and, at the moment when the molten glaze seemed to shimmer (around 1100°C), removed, using iron tongs. Sudden cooling of the glaze in the open air turned the metallic oxides a lustrous, lacquer-like black rather than the softer brown or black that would result from slow cooling in the kiln.[2] The scars of the tongs are visible on the bowl's wall. An alternate term for this ware is *hikidashiguro,* "drawn-out black."

The process whereby this shape and glaze developed, corresponding to the second half of the sixteenth century, is deeply linked both to technological developments at Japanese kilns and to the evolution of *chanoyu* practice. At the end of the fifteenth century, Mino and Seto potters had introduced an advanced form of kiln structure that involved firing individual wares in protective ceramic cases, or saggers, and thus gained far better control over firing glazes.[3] The potters responded, seemingly, by experimenting with a wider range of glaze colors, expanding beyond the green and brown glazes based on Chinese celadon and *temmoku* prototypes. Iron was added to the greenish ash glaze or brushed beneath it, for instance, to create a warm yellow-toned glaze. The repertory changed as well, as tableware — bowls and dishes for serving food — replaced the Chinese-style jar and vase forms that had predominated.

In the phase of Mino kiln activity beginning around 1555, tableware production on an increased scale accompanied the first appearance of tea bowls made specifically as *chanoyu* wares, distinguished by new glaze colors as well as new forms. Many tea bowls took the form of low cylinders with small foot rings, broad bases, rounded hips, and upright walls. These cylinders used several new varieties of glaze — warm yellow (now termed Yellow Seto), rust brown, iron black, and the early form of "drawn out" Black Seto — although some were completely unglazed, reflecting the contemporaneous importance of unglazed Bizen and Shigaraki tea wares. Black Seto glaze may have originated through observation of the testers used for the various dark glazes — small chips made to be pulled out from the porthole at the point when the glaze appeared to be mature and cooled quickly to study the resultant color.

A new bowl form quickly evolved to suit the qualities of the new glaze. Larger overall, the heavier cylinder had a wider foot rim and squared hip. This shape may have contributed to the bowl's stability as it was manipulated with the tongs to draw it out of the kiln, but it also enjoyed success in the urban market for tea wares: the first mention in a tea ceremony diary of a "black tea bowl," possibly Black Seto, occurs in 1570.[4] By the 1580s, the Black Seto tea bowl was made in a larger size still, with low foot rim, hip bent at a sharp angle, and the wheel-thrown form altered by carving.

Fig. 1. Black Raku tea bowl, Japan, Kyoto, Raku workshop, Momoyama period, ca. 1585–89, pottery with black glaze, black lacquer repairs, height 8.5, diameter 10.8 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, gift of Charles Lang Freer, F02.52

Toward the end of that last phase of production, around 1600, many Black Seto bowls exhibit intensive carving and an overall warping of the form characteristic of the "Black Oribe" style, named for the tea master Furuta Oribe (1544–1615) and associated with ceramic wares produced at a new type of multichamber climbing kiln introduced at that time. The Freer Black Seto bowl belongs to the classic phase of Black Seto production, between 1580 and 1605, although it may date relatively late in that sequence. The prominent sculpting of its wall closely resembles the deeply sculpted rim of a Black Oribe bowl made at the first climbing kiln.[5]

The decades during which Black Seto tea bowls developed corresponds to the intensive evolution of the *wabi* form of *chanoyu,* away from a Sino-centered repertory of utensils toward one incorporating Korean and Southeast Asian as well as native Japanese ceramics. At the same time, emphasis shifted from the rarity of the utensils themselves toward the spirit embodied in the event to which they contributed. A prototype for the cylindrical bowls made in Mino may have been offered by cylindrical Korean tea bowls with coarse slip-inlaid patterns under celadon glaze, dating to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which acquired new importance in the *wabicha* repertory. One such Korean bowl was owned by Sen no Rikyū (1522–1591), the most prominent figure in the development of *wabicha,*[6] while the earliest datable heirloom cylindrical bowl from the Mino kilns is a Yellow Seto bowl said to have been owned by Rikyū's teacher, Kitamuki Dōchin (1504–1562) and bearing Rikyū's cipher written in red lacquer on the base.[7] As various other Japanese kilns began making tea bowls, they also produced cylindrical forms. The most famous example, and the one most closely linked aesthetically to Black Seto, is the Black Raku bowl associated with Rikyū's patronage of a Kyoto tile maker, Tanaka Chōjirō, and thought to have begun by about 1586 (fig. 1).[8] Whereas the Korean and Yellow Seto bowls had been thrown on the potter's wheel, however, the Black Raku bowl was formed entirely by

hand modeling and sculpting, emphasizing the individuality of each bowl. The Black Seto bowl, thrown on the wheel and subsequently manipulated by carving, represents a bridge between the two modes.

The *imayaki kuro chawan* (newly fired black tea bowl) used together with a black lacquered *natsume* tea container at the tea gathering of a prominent warrior in 1588 could have been either Black Seto or Raku.[9] In either case, the black bowl participates in the *wabi* domain created by Sen no Rikyū, especially in its severe blackness. The importance of Black Seto tea bowls in the realm of tea drinking between 1570 and 1605 (during the periods of Rikyū's dominance and of the influence of his students, including Furuta Oribe) is documented not only through textual references but by archaeological excavation of Black Seto bowls from the sites of castles, castle towns, and merchant neighborhoods in Kyoto and Sakai.[10]

The history of ownership of the Freer Black Seto bowl is not known. The bowl is stored in a purple silk crepe padded bag and housed in an uninscribed black-lacquered paulownia-wood box, which is wrapped in a square of block-printed Indian cotton lined with gray silk.

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Louise Allison Cort, *Japanese Collections in the Freer Gallery of Art: Seto and Mino Ceramics* (Washington, D.C. and Honolulu: Freer Gallery of Art and University of Hawaii Press, 1992), p. 90; Michael R. Cunningham, *The Triumph of Japanese Style: 16th-Century Art in Japan* (Cleveland, Ohio: Cleveland Museum of Art and Indiana University Press, 1991), no. 78; Japan Art Center, Inc., ed., *Ceramics — Japanese Art: Selections from Western Collections*, vol. 9. (Tokyo: Mainichi Shimbunsha, 1981), no. 21.

NOTES

1. On tea drinking in China, see John Blofeld, *The Chinese Art of Tea* (Boston: Shambala, 1985).

2. The modern Mino potter, Arakawa Tōyozō, devoted his career to recreating Black Seto and other Mino glazes of the sixteenth century. His remarks on Black Seto are translated in Janet Barriskill, *Visiting the Mino Kilns* (Broadway, Australia: Wild Peony, 1995), pp. 38–39.

3. The present understanding of the process of evolution at the Mino kilns is based on archaeological excavations of kiln sites beginning in the 1930s. The discussion here is drawn from a summary of these findings by Itō Yoshiaki, "Momoyama ni okeru futatsu no kuro — kuro raku to setoguro ni tsuite" (Two kinds of black in the Momoyama period — concerning Black Raku and Black Seto), *Museum* 520 (July 1994): 4–19. The major publication of the Mino kiln sites is Narasaki Shōichi, ed., *Mino no kotō* (Mino's ancient kilns) (Kyoto: Kōrinsha, 1976).

4. The earliest use of the term "Black Seto" for such bowls appears in the box inscription, attributed to Rikyū's grandson, Sen Sōtan (1578–1658), for a tea bowl known as Oharajō (Ohara maiden). Hayashiya Seizō, ed., *Cha no dōgu (2)*, in *Chadō shūkin*, vol. 11 (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1983), nos. 117–18.

5. Narasaki Shōichi, ed., *Mino no kotō*, fig. 143.

6. Hayashiya Seizō, ed., *Cha no dōgu (2)*, no. 46.

7. Ibid., 115–16.

8. The textual and artifactual evidence for the emergence of the Black Raku bowl, as argued by earlier scholars, is sumarized in Itō Yoshiaki, "Momoyama ni okeru futatsu no kuro — kuro raku to setoguro no tsuite," pp. 4–8.

9. "Matsuya kaiki," in *Chadō koten zenshū* (Anthology of classic tea texts), ed. Sen Sōshitsu, vol. 9 (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1957), p. 141

10. *Iseki ni miru Sengoku — Momoyama no chadōgu* (Tea utensils of the Warring States/Momoyama period as seen in uncovered relics) (Seto: Aichi Prefectural Ceramic Museum, 1997), nos. 231 (Kaneyama Castle), 276, 279, 282, 283 (Kiyosu Castle), 461, 462, 482, 483, 499–501 (Kyoto), 573 (Osaka Castle), 620, 622 (Sakai).

Seto tea caddy (*chaire*) named Mizai ("Not Yet")

Japan, Aichi Prefecture, Seto kilns,
Momoyama period, ca. 1580–1605
Stoneware with brown glaze, ivory lid
Height 7.3, diameter 8.8 cm
F1998.16

The prototype for the ceramic tea caddy, or *chaire,* as the container for powdered tea was the brown-glazed Chinese jarlet, which entered Japan along with the Chinese custom of drinking tea prepared from the powdered, unfermented leaves mixed with hot water directly in the drinking bowl. The original use of such jars in China is unclear and may have been quite utilitarian, but Japanese owners fitted the treasured jars with ivory lids and storage bags sewed from precious Chinese silk brocade and displayed them, in the Chinese manner, on lacquer trays. The wish to replicate these jars, as well as other brown-glazed Chinese wares, including tea bowls from the Jian kilns of Fujian Province (called *temmoku* in Japan), impelled potters at Seto to develop a brown glaze approximating the Chinese one. By the end of the thirteenth century, they had added the brown glaze to their staple pale green glaze. Seto tea caddies became acceptable substitutes for rare and costly Chinese ones, and as time passed some acquired their own pedigrees through association with influential people in the formative years of the tea ceremony.

Typically Seto tea caddies are smoothly contoured, carefully trimmed, and of a standard size, closely following the conventions of Chinese models. This *chaire,* however, represents a brief moment when even the most conservative of tea utensils was subject to the sculptural impulse that swept over Japanese ceramics in the late sixteenth century. It is both taller and, in particular, broader than the standard tea caddy, with a heavy base, sharply angled shoulder, and powerful neck. Around the shoulder are pressed seven large pellets of clay, forming ornamental knobs known as *ruiza* after the Chinese term for bosses used to secure a leather drum head. The iron-rich glaze into which the jar was dipped fired to a coppery luster clouded with wisps of black. The pale, grainy clay of the unglazed hip and base turned a warm, reddish-gold. A rough shell-shaped mark on the base, produced by a twisted straw cord used to sever the jar from the wheelhead, has been left intentionally untrimmed.

The *ruiza* around the shoulder connect this tea caddy to small, wide-mouthed Chinese jars bearing a row of dots of white glaze applied to the unglazed clay surface of the neck. Only the interior of such jars is coated with iron glaze, and the rest of the unglazed exterior is combed to resemble the texture of a woven willow basket. Such jars were made in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries at kilns in Jiangxi Province.[1] Some were taken to Japan, where they were used on occasion as *chaire* and became known as *ruiza* tea caddies.[2] Such tea caddies are listed among the nineteen types of Chinese tea jars in the document *Kundaikan Sōchōki,* which reflects the collecting and connoisseurship at the time of the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimasa (1435–1490).[3] Archaeological evidence shows that Seto potters first fired *ruiza* tea caddies at kiln sites dating to 1340–60.[4] Some early pieces faithfully imitate the features of Chinese *ruiza* jars, just as *temmoku* tea bowls from the same sites faithfully copy Chinese models.[5] Others do not replicate the basket weave but simply suggest it by straight or wavy combing running horizontally around the body. These latter variations are found at sites dating between 1340 and 1460. They have not been found at sites from the period 1460–90 although, given the importance of Chinese *ruiza* jars, they probably continued to be made along with Seto versions of other Chinese tea caddy shapes.

By the 1490s at the latest, however, production technology at Seto and adjacent Mino, the only other center for glazed ceramics in Japan at the time, underwent a significant improvement in kiln structure and resultant control of the firing atmosphere, leading to more refined glazes. The variety of tea caddies produced contracted to just three types, and *ruiza* jars and other more elaborate Chinese forms disappeared from the repertory. In the course of the sixteenth century, as the form of tea known as *wabicha,* with its preference for simpler, rougher utensils, grew in influence, Seto tea caddies became measurably thicker and rougher in workmanship. By the period 1580–1605, they exhibited rugged handling of the clay in combination with a conscious effort to produce complex glaze effects.

This trend reversed dramatically in the early seventeenth century. The domain including Seto came under control of one of the three branches of the ruling Tokugawa family, at the same time as tea masters serving the warrior class in particular regained interest in Chinese tea utensils. The warrior Kobori Enshū (1579–1647) reappraised numerous older Seto tea caddies, establishing their reputation as classics. By the 1620s Seto kilns were making thinly thrown, carefully modeled tea caddies with neatly trimmed bases and thin, matte glazes, returning to a neoclassical form based on Chinese models.

The Freer *chaire* belongs to the brief moment when Seto tea caddies participated in Momoyama period ceramic taste. The seven bosses on this jar are massive in comparison with the ten or twelve small ones on earlier copies of Chinese *ruiza* jars. They may relate, in fact, not so much to the Chinese models as to the contemporaneous use of similar outsized bosses on larger tea utensil forms from other Japanese kilns. Some massive vases and water jars from Bizen, Shigaraki, Iga, and Karatsu exhibit knoblike bosses on the shoulder that have the effect of further emphasizing their exaggerated sculptural forms. It is possible that the *ruiza* on such vessels are distantly inspired by bosses used on Chinese celadon-glazed vessels of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; if so, however, they are applied with ironic effect to these bulky pieces with their intentionally rough surfaces. The context of excavated examples of such pieces suggests a date for this style centering around 1590–1620.[6]

The rapid transformation in Seto tea caddies in the early decades of the seventeenth century is illustrated by a *ruiza* tea caddy dated archaeologically to circa 1605–24.[7] The thin-walled, nearly spherical vessel with smoothly trimmed base bears a collar of nine petite bosses around its elon-

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gated neck. A thin, matte brown glaze cloaks the jar. In this jar, the *ruiza* tea caddy comes full circle to its Chinese antecedent, reinstating the bosses as delicate accents rather than the bold sculptural details they provide on the Freer *chaire*.

The Freer *chaire* is housed in a padded storage bag (*shifuku*) sewn from dull purple silk crepe.[8] In addition, it is provided with two bags for display, both made from Chinese-style brocaded silk, one with a design of silver peony vine scrolls on a dark brown twill ground and the other with gold brocade "Buddhist treasure" motifs on a medium brown twill ground. The *chaire* and the two display bags are contained in a rectangular paulownia-wood box with three compartments. The interior of the box lid bears an inscription by Sen Sōshitsu XV (born 1923), present head of the Urasenke school of *chanoyu* in Kyoto, identifying the vessel as Seto ware and naming it Mizai ("Not Yet").[9] The box lid is protected by a folded sheet of thick white paper, and the box is secured in a wrapper made from block-printed Indian cotton.

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NOTES

1. Robert D. Mowry, *Hare's Fur, Tortoiseshell, and Partridge Feathers: Chinese Brown- and Black-Glazed Ceramics, 400–1400* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Art Museums, 1996), no. 110. Mowry proposes that the bosses "might descend from the star- or flower-shaped bosses that were applied to some tenth- and eleventh-century northern white-ware jars of drum form to simulate the nails used to fasten the drum skin to the drum core" (p. 266).

2. Numerous Chinese jars of this type were excavated from the ship that sank in the 1320s off the coast of Sinan, Korea. Munwha kongbobu, Munhwajae kwanriguk (Bureau of Cultural Properties, Ministry of Culture and Information), *Sinan haejō yumul* (Relics from the sea floor at Sinan), vol. 1 (Seoul, 1983), nos. 104, 207ab. One such jar was full of gold coins when it was excavated from a medieval site in Yamanashi Prefecture, Japan. Nezu Institute of Fine Arts and Tokugawa Art Museum, *Chaire* (Tea caddies) (Tokyo and Nagoya: 1977), no. 101.

3. Hayashiya Seizō, "Chaire no kanshō" (Appreciation of tea caddies), in *Cha no dōgu (1)* (Tea utensils 1), ed. Hayashiya Seizō, in *Chadō shūkin*, vol. 10 (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1986), p. 180.

4. The discussion of Seto tea caddies that follows is based on Inoue Kikuo, "Kōkogaku kara mita Seto chaire" (Seto tea caddies from an archaeological perspective), in *Enshū no mita chaire* (Tea caddies in the Enshū tradition) (Tokyo: Gotoh Museum, 1996), pp. 168–81. This ground-breaking article is the first to attempt to date Seto tea caddies according to archaeological excavations rather than by chronological categories established by early-nineteenth-century connoisseurs, which in the light of archaeology prove to be highly unreliable.

5. *Cha no dōgu (1)*, ed. Hayashiya Seizō, no. 190.

6. A water jar of flattened spherical shape with iron glaze on the upper half of the body and (judging from the photograph) eight dimpled bosses on the shoulder, excavated from a site in Sakai, is dated to the late sixteenth century. Aichi Prefecture Ceramics Museum, *Iseki ni miru Sengoku — Momoyama no chadōgu* (Tea utensils of the Warring States/Momoyama period as seen in uncovered relics) (Seto: Aichi Prefectural Ceramic Museum, 1997), no. 694. Bosses appear on the shoulders of a number of Bizen tea utensils — two vases, one freshwater jar, one wastewater jar — and one Iga freshwater jar all excavated from a site in central Kyoto thought to be a dealer's shop dating to 1627 at the latest (based on the date for a Chinese porcelain dish excavated in the same site). *Rakuchū Momoyama no yakimono* (Momoyama ceramics from Kyoto) (Tōki City, Gifu Prefecture: Tōki-shi Mino Tōji Rekishikan, 1997), p. 16 and nos. 63–63, 70, 72.

7. *Enshū no mita chaire* (Tea caddies in the Enshū tradition) (Tokyo: Gotoh Museum, 1996), no. 25; Inoue, "Kōkogaku kara mita Seto chaire," p. 174.

8. For a detailed discussion of the bags, boxes, and other accessories housing an important Seto tea caddy, see Louise Allison Cort, "Looking at White Dew," *Chanoyu Quarterly*, no. 43 (1985): 36–48.

9. The term derives from Zen Buddhist usage. *Zengaku daijiten* (Dictionary of Zen studies) (Tokyo: Daishūkan shoten, 1978), 2: 1181.

Powdered tea container (*natsume*), Rikyū medium shape

Sei'ami (active late 16th century)
Japan, Kyoto, Momoyama period (1568–1615)
Lathe-turned wood, black lacquer
Height 7.2, diameter 6.9 cm
F1998.18

The tea master Sen no Rikyū (1522–1591) was born in the international port city of Sakai, but as the most influential connoisseur of his age his career was closely linked to the major political figures of the day—particularly Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598), who rose rapidly to power after 1582—and he spent the latter years of his life in the political and cultural capital of Kyoto. Rikyū's name is associated with active patronage and close aesthetic supervision of various Kyoto artisans for the creation of tea ceremony utensils. The specialists included ironmonger Tsuji Yōjirō for cast-iron kettles, used to boil water for tea, and potter Tanaka Chōjirō for red- and black-glazed tea bowls, forerunners of the ware known as Raku. This black-lacquered wooden container for powdered tea, termed a *natsume*, was made by the Kyoto lacquerer Sei'ami, whose name is also closely linked to Rikyū's.[1] Rikyū is recorded as praising the lacquerer for his connoisseurship as well as for his craft: "No matter how many times one requests Sei'ami to distinguish among good and bad *natsume*, he does not make a mistake."[2]

The medium-sized black *natsume* in the shape preferred by Rikyū, as executed by Sei'ami, became an established type of tea container and has been replicated countless times since the late sixteenth century.[3] The Freer *natsume* is one of the prototypes, bearing Sei'ami's signature—the Chinese character *sei*—incised almost invisibly with a pointed metal tool inside the recessed base, to the left.[4] The deftly turned wooden core for the vessel retains enough thickness, especially on the base and lid, to have a pleasing heft. Reflecting Rikyū's preference for *natsume* form, the lower body tapers in a long curve toward the base, while the lid is more angular; the height and diameter are nearly identical, creating a square overall proportion.[5] The black lacquer, applied in a thin, lustrous coat, has a faint tortoiseshell tinge when seen in raking light.

The packaging for the *natsume* constitutes as well as documents the vessel's later history. The *natsume* is enclosed in a bag (*shifuku*) tailored from Chinese-style silk brocade with peony vine scrolls in gold on a green twill ground, and it fits into a clear-lacquered wooden box contained in turn in a bag sewn from Indian block-printed cotton. The lid of a paulownia-wood box housing this ensemble bears a paper cover identifying the contents as a "black *natsume* made by Sei'ami." This box, wrapped in a cotton cloth, is fitted in turn into a larger paulownia-wood box whose lid is inscribed in a different hand, "Rikyū *natsume* . . . from Sōwa." A protective paper cover for that lid has a longer inscription in a third hand, which repeats the information about the maker, attributes the innermost inscription to Kanamori Sōwa (1584–1656), and notes that the *natsume* formerly belonged to the lord of Kaga. The Kyoto-based tea master Sōwa greatly influenced tea practice among courtiers and nobility and is remembered especially for his close association with the ceramics of Nonomura Ninsei (see F1998.8ab). The Maeda house, rulers of Kaga Province (modern Ishikawa Prefecture) during the Edo period (1615–1868), interacted with Sōwa during his lifetime and continued to promote Sōwa's style of tea practice in their castle town, Kanazawa.

The *natsume* form with its rounded shoulders and base is named after its resemblance to the datelike fruit of the jujube tree native to China. It is one of a considerable variety of wooden containers for tea, known generically as *chaki*. The prototypes for *chaki* appear to be Japanese turned-wood containers that originally held medicine, face powder, or other substances but were adapted for tea. The earliest extant records of tea gatherings, dating from the 1530s onward, frequently mention use of various straight-sided shapes of *chaki*, including *nakatsugi*, with a deep lid fitting over a flange in the wall; *kinrinji*, with slightly domed lid fitting inside the rim of a plain cylinder, whose original is said to have been made by Emperor Go-Daigo (reigned 1318–39); *yarō* or medicine container; and *fubuki*, with a beveled edge on the deep lid.[6] One of the first recorded uses of a *natsume* (connoting a softer silhouette with rounded edges) occurs in an account of a tea gathering held by Rikyū in 1566, in which he used a Chinese *temmoku* bowl elevated on a black lacquered stand and "tea contained in a *natsume*."[7] The *temmoku* tea bowl clearly indicates that the tea was prepared in the formal variant called thick tea, wherein all the guests (two on that occasion) passed the same bowl of tea and drank in succession. In present-day practice *chaki* are commonly used for holding the powdered tea used to prepare informal thin tea, while ceramic tea caddies, either Chinese or Japanese, are reserved for thick tea. Sixteenth-century records such as the one just cited show, however, that this distinction was not so strictly observed.

Records beginning in the late 1570s do indicate a growing association of the *natsume* shape with thin tea, even when, in the same event, a *yarō* was used for thick tea prepared in a Chinese *temmoku* tea bowl or "fine Korean bowl."[8] The new popularity of the *natsume* form coincides with Sen no Rikyū's rising authority as a tea master. By 1586, in circles close to Rikyū, the *natsume* had almost completely replaced other containers for preparing thin tea.[9] The simple black-lacquered *natsume* accorded with Rikyū's shaping of the various physical aspects of *wabi* tea, including his preferences for small rooms and for black tea bowls. Collaborating with Sei'ami in the creation of appropriate *natsume*, Rikyū revealed through his instructions to the lacquerer—indeed in his specific choice of lacquerer—how he wished to distinguish their mood from that of more formal *chaki*: "For *natsume* mix some debris back into the filtered lacquer and brush it on quickly; for *nakatsugi* use care and apply it smoothly. Kizō (a Sakai lacquerer who worked for Rikyū) and Yōzō (from Kyoto) lacquer their *natsume* too precisely, so they are cumbrous. The best *nakatsugi* are made by (the Nara lacquerers) Hidetsugu and Fujishige."[10]

In addition to the Freer *natsume* by Sei'ami, other material evidence survives for Rikyū's commissions to him. Extant Sei'ami

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tea containers include a black medium-size *natsume,*[11] two black *shiribukura* (with base broader than shoulder) *natsume,*[12] a *kinrinji*-shape tea container,[13] and a medium-size *natsume* with chrysanthemum motifs executed in sprinkled gold powder over translucent reddish lacquer.[14] Sei'ami also made the black-lacquered stand *(daisu)* used by Rikyū together with Chinese bronze utensils and a Chinese *temmoku* bowl for formal preparation of tea for dignitaries, including Hideyoshi. The stand is signed "Tenka'ichi [first under heaven] Sei'ami," using the title said to have been bestowed upon Sei'ami by Hideyoshi himself.[15] Sei'ami is believed to have made a black-lacquered incense container in the shape of a wisteria seed for Rikyū.[16] One tea diary even records a bamboo ladle made for Rikyū by Sei'ami, although a different character is used to write *sei.*[17]

The focus of Rikyū's interest on the quality of blackness and the nuanced elegance of the undecorated form is revealed by a set of thirty-two *chaki* commissioned by the seventh head of the Omote Senke school of tea, Jōshinsai (1706–1751), showing shapes associated with the taste of eminent tea masters. Sixteen — fully half — were linked to Rikyū's taste, and all employ plain black lacquer, bearing at most simple sprinkled-gold motifs of chrysanthemum or paulownia-blossom crests.[18] (Generally, later *natsume* exhibit great variation in shape and lively seasonal or occasional decoration made possible precisely by their materials, as contrasted to the limitations of clay *chaire.*) A further measure of Rikyū's pursuit of the ideal black-lacquered *natsume* is found in the containers by other lacquerers also said to have been owned by him.[19] One is even attributed on the basis of its workmanship to a nameless "town lacquerer," showing that Rikyū did not simply instruct master craftsmen like Sei'ami to make their work purposefully casual but sought unpremeditated roughness in the work of ordinary lacquerers.

Strangely, the work of lacquerers closely associated with the tea ceremony is not usually mentioned in presentations of mainstream lacquer history, even though makers' signatures appear earlier on *natsume* and other lacquer vessels for tea than they do on comparable ceramics.[20] Japanese lacquer scholar Ikeda Iwao, speaking as one who has looked closely at countless black *natsume,* comments on the depth of these objects:

> Even within the category of black lacquer, depending on the lacquerer, differences in the quality and processing of the (raw) lacquer result in differences in the translucent color of the (hardened) lacquer, and differences can also be discovered in the usage of the brush. In short, although these are termed collectively "black natsume," variations in the shape, workmanship, and tonality of the lacquer are sufficient to differentiate not only the period but even the individual maker of the piece.[21]

Borrowing a modern idiom, the former owner and donor of the Freer *natsume* aptly termed the black *natsume* the "little black dress" of tea utensils. Surely Rikyū and Chanel would have understood one another.

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NOTES

1. *Genshoku Chadō Daijiten* (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1975), p. 494. Sei'ami's Kyoto workshop continued for two more generations after him, closing around the end of the seventeenth century.

2. "Chawa shigetsu shū," in *Chadō koten zenshū*, ed. Sen Sōshitsu, vol. 10 (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1961), p. 206.

3. The *natsume* shape is made in small, medium, and large sizes, ranging in height from 5.2 to 8.5 cm.

4. The fine-line signature, termed *harigaki* (needle writing), is also used in Kō'ami Matazaemon's signature on Hideyoshi's shrine, dated 1596, housed in the temple Kōdaiji. Beatrix von Ragué, *A History of Japanese Lacquerwork* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 151.

5. Earlier extant *natsume*, including one attributed to a Nara lacquerer, Haneda Gōro, active in the late fifteenth century onward, and another said to have been owned by the tea master Takeno Jōō (1502–1555), are broader than they are tall. Hayashiya Seizō, ed., *Cha no dōgu (2)*, in *Chadō shūkin*, vol. 11 (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1983), nos. 251, 253–54.

6.Visiting various Sakai tea men in the New Year of 1558, the Nara lacquer merchant Matsuya Hisamasa saw *kinrinji*, *yarō*, and *fubuki*, including a red-lacquered *fubuki*. "Matsuya kaiki," in *Chadō koten zenshū*, ed. Sen Sōshitsu, vol. 9 (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1957), pp. 64–69. A red-lacquered *natsume* is associated with the taste of Sakai tea master Takeno Jōō. Murai Yasuhiko, ed., *Sen no Rikyū*, in *Chadō shūkin*, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1983), nos. 25–26.

7. "Tennōjiya kaiki," in *Chadō koten zenshū*, ed. Sen Sōshitsu, vol. 7 (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1959), p. 126.

8. "Matsuya kaiki," p. 87 (1578), 91 (1579, using a "black tea bowl," possibly Black Seto ware).

9. MOA Museum of Art and Chadō Shiryōkan, *Chanoyu no shiki — natsume* (Atami and Kyoto: MOA Museum of Art, 1996), p. 176 (chart summarizing all mentions of *chaki* in published tea diaries). A collection of Rikyū's anecdotes on tea, gathered from his grandson, shows that Rikyū allowed for differences in taste, instructing his assistant to prepare tea in a *natsume* when the guests were to be sympathetic colleagues from Sakai but to put it in a ceramic container when Kyoto guests were expected, since they were focused on the superficial impressiveness of tea utensils and did not appreciate the spiritual depth of simple utensils such as *natsume*. *Chawa shigetsu shū*, translated in Dennis Hirota, comp. and ed., *Wind in the Pines: Classic Writings of the Way of Tea as a Buddhist Path* (Fremont, Calif.: Asian Humanities Press, 1995), p. 253.

10. "Chawa shigetsu shū," in *Chadō koten zenshū*, ed. Sen Sōshitsu, 10:222.

11. MOA Museum of Art and Chadō Shiryōkan, *Chanoyu no shiki — natsume* , no. 13. This piece was authenticated by the fifth head of the Mushanokōji school, the sixth head of the Omote Senke school, and the eighth head of the Urasenke school of tea, the three professional tea schools managed by Rikyū's descendants. It is fitted with two silk bags.

12. Ibid., no. 14, and *Rikyū Daijiten* (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1989), p. 310.

13. *Genshoku Chadō Daijiten*, p. 494.

14. Hayashiya Seizō, ed., *Cha no dōgu (2)*, no. 262; also MOA Museum of Art and Chadō Shiryōkan, *Chanoyu no shiki — natsume*, no. 32. The attribution of this unsigned piece to Sei'ami is supported on the basis of its "brush strokes typical of Sei'ami." An heirloom of the Mōri house, rulers of the Hagi domain during the Edo period (1615–1868), it later belonged to the industrialist Masuda Don'ō (1848–1938).

15. Murai Yasuhiko, ed., *Sen no Rikyū*, plate 104; also Hirota, comp. and ed., *Wind in the Pines*, pp. 15, 64.

16. Ikeda Iwao, *Cha no shitsugei-kōgō* (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1994), no. 57. This rather large (diameter 9.2 cm) and heavy piece is unsigned, but the good-quality lacquer is thickly applied, leaving delicate brush marks, and Ikeda attributes it by its workmanship to Sei'ami or possibly to the second-generation head of the workshop.

17. "Matsuya kaiki," p. 328. The event took place in 1637.

18. Hayashiya Seizō, ed., *Cha no dōgu (2)*, no. 290.

19. Ibid., nos. 257–60.

20. In a book of 246 pages, Beatrix von Ragué simply points out, in just two paragraphs, that little is known of the craftsmen beyond their names and concludes that they "should be regarded more as skilled craftsmen rather than artists." Von Ragué, *History of Japanese Lacquerwork*, p. 165. Even the Tokyo National Museum, in its comprehensive 1977 exhibition of East Asian lacquer traditions, did not show a single *natsume*. What it did show — the pictorial *makie* tradition and the mother-of-pearl inlaid *namban* lacquer of the same period — emphasizes the understatement of the undecorated black lacquer *natsume*. Tokyo National Museum, *Oriental Lacquer Arts* (Tokyo: Tokyo National Museum, 1977).

21. Hayashiya Seizō, ed., *Cha no dōgu (2)*, p. 319. Ikeda demonstrates subtle variation through his own measured drawings (showing the profile of interior as well as exterior) of *natsume* made by Gorō, Kōan, Hidetsugu, and Sei'ami. Ibid., p. 232.

Tea scoop (*chashaku*) and container

Furuta Oribe (1544–1615)
Japan, Momoyama period, late 16th–early 17th century
Bamboo, cedar
Length 18.4 cm
F1998.20a–c

This small, sculptural tool made of bent and shaved bamboo gives us direct access to the hand and mind of one of the most important figures in the development of the tea ceremony, the warrior Furuta Oribe. Oribe's name is equated with the bold, expansive character of the tea utensils and tea architecture that emerged in the 1590s, following the death of Sen no Rikyū in 1591 and departing from Rikyū's preference for a discreet and understated manner.[1] Among the Danziger tea utensils, the Bizen *mizusashi*, the Black Seto tea bowl, and the Seto tea caddy represent the sense of dramatic scale and sculptural presence of utensils of that era, as does this tea scoop made by Oribe himself.

The function of the tea scoop is to transfer powdered tea from the lacquer or ceramic container to the tea bowl. Although the Chinese prototypes for this essential tool included scoops made of gold, iron, and ivory, bamboo became the material favored among Japanese practitioners of *chanoyu* for its strength coupled with lightness, its attractively varied appearance, and its gentleness to the surfaces of lacquer *natsume* and ceramic bowl. The soft yet decisive sound of the bamboo scoop tapped against the bowl's rim to release the powder is among the central sounds of the *chanoyu* experience.

Sixteenth-century tea diaries record the names of professional tea scoop makers such as Shūtoku, a Nara craftsman who was famous for his bamboo and ivory scoops.[2] Tea participants quickly realized, however, that anyone could learn to make a passable tea scoop. The maker chose a seasoned bamboo stalk for the interest of its coloration and its node form, and he decided where along the handle of the scoop the node would be positioned — near the center of the handle, low down, or at the tip. He cut the appropriate section of the stalk and split it to remove a strip about 1.5 centimeters wide and centering on the groove that occurs naturally in the stalk above or below the node. After soaking the strip in water, he warmed the upper end over a candle and then bent it to the desired angle for the scoop. He used a sharp knife to cut the piece to the desired finished length, then to trim the sides and tip of the scoop, shave away the extra flesh behind the node and along the back of the handle, and trim the end of the handle.[3]

Like the other tea utensils made from bamboo — vases and lid rests — the bamboo tea scoop was essentially disposable, prepared for use on one occasion only. As tea practitioners realized how vividly the details of a tea scoop expressed the taste of its maker, however, the bamboo tea scoop became a treasured memento of an occasion or a person. In keeping with this trend, it became customary to provide a container for the tea scoop, in the form of a tube made from a section of bamboo stalk, with the node forming the bottom and a wooden plug capping the top. On this matching tube (*tomozutsu*) the maker wrote the tea scoop's name or a dedicatory inscription and signed with his cipher. If the tube was provided by a later owner, it became the vehicle for a written authentication by an expert. The tube has often become an integral part of the object; tea scoop and container are always photographed together, with the inscribed tube often situated to the viewers'

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left of the scoop, analogous to the customary position of the colophon and signature on a painting or calligraphy.

For this *chashaku,* Oribe used a section of bamboo with even coloration that has now darkened to a mellow patina. Following his custom in making *chashaku,* he elected to position the node high on the handle, closer to the scoop than to the handle's end. The deep central groove in the upper section follows a decisively angled bend into a long scoop, whose broad end is cut in a point. Below the node, the smooth handle tapers to a narrow, square-cut butt. Typical of Oribe's *chashaku* is the exaggerated contrast between narrow handle and broad scoop. The effect is to concentrate the texture and motion of the utensil in the foreshortened upper end, above the slight lift of the node, and to balance it against the quietude of the elongated plain handle.

The Freer *chashaku* is more restrained in style than Oribe's most famous tea scoop, which Oribe named Naginata (Halberd), a name appropriate to a warrior's object. That highly mannered object has a wide scoop bent up at a sharp angle, with a pointed tip; the centrally positioned node is thick and coarsely cut away. Oribe inscribed the case of spotted "sesame-seed" bamboo, which he may have chosen and trimmed himself.[4]

The later container for the Freer *chashaku* is inscribed "Ko Ori saku" (made by Old Ori), using the first characters of Furuta and Oribe, the affectionate nickname for the master that commonly appears in such inscriptions. The writer's signature, "Sōsa," at the bottom of the case is that of Zuiryusai Sōsa (1660–1701), fifth head of the Omote Senke school of *chanoyu.* Zuiryusai impressed his round, black-inked seal at the join of the cylinder and the cedar-wood plug. The identities of both the tea scoop maker and the case inscriber are confirmed by a later inscription on the underside of the lid of the paulownia-wood box containing the ensemble. The tube, which holds the tea scoop wrapped in a fragment of age-darkened cotton, is enclosed in a case tailored from striped cotton lined with silk. An old brown silk bag, too tattered for further use, is carefully preserved in the box.

By Oribe's time, the maker used the bamboo tube for inscribing a dedication when he took a tea scoop as gift when calling upon another tea practitioner. Several Oribe tea scoops with such inscribed containers (called *okuritsutsu*) document Oribe's tea-related interactions with Maeda Gen'i (1539–1602), one of Toyotomi Hideyoshi's five senior officers,[5] and with Kobori Enshū (1579–1647), whose *chanoyu* style became influential in the decades after Oribe's death in 1615.[6]

Other Oribe tea scoops with containers provided and inscribed by later figures include one by Itamiya Sōfu (dates unknown), a Sakai merchant and official active in the early seventeenth century.[7] Two Oribe tea scoops were collected in a group of thirty-one belonging to the prominent Kyoto aristocrat, Konoe Yorakuin Iehiro (1667–1736). One is in an unmarked case, but the case for the other is inscribed "Ko Ori saku" by Bunshuku Sōson (1658–1708), second head of the Mushanokōji school of *chanoyu.*[8]

These and other heirloom *chashaku* testify to the importance of Oribe's persona and style to later generations of tea men of all classes. The power of this seemingly ephemeral utensil as a personal memento is most clearly demonstrated, however, by Oribe's treatment of a *chashaku* that he received from his teacher, Sen no Rikyū (1522–1591). When Rikyū was ordered by his lord, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, to commit ritual disembowelment, Oribe and another devoted student — also a member of the warrior class — were the last to bid farewell to their master, who gave each a tea scoop made by his own hand. Oribe named his *chashaku* Namida (Tears) and provided it with a black lacquered case, in which a square opening revealed the node of the tea scoop. Oribe is said to have placed it on his household Buddhist altar in lieu of a memorial tablet for his master.[9]

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NOTES

1. Oribe's name emerges in tea documents several years before 1585, when he became master of a small domain near Kyoto. His residence in the castle town of Fushimi, on the Yodo River south of Kyoto, was the locus of his recorded tea activities. After fighting on the victorious side of the Tokugawa at the decisive battle of Sekigahara in 1600, Oribe benefited from Tokugawa efforts to incorporate *chanoyu* into official government entertainments; in 1610 he was invited to instruct the second Tokugawa shogun, Hidetada. Simultaneously Oribe also moved further toward consolidating his own style, "one characterized by spaciousness, vigor, and idiosyncracy." Richard Wilson, "The Tea Ceremony: Art and Etiquette for the Tokugawa Era," in *The Tokugawa Collection: The Japan of the Shoguns* (Montreal: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1989), p. 67. In late 1614, during the Tokugawa campaign against their chief rivals, the Toyotomi, at Osaka, Oribe was grazed by a bullet — allegedly while cutting bamboo to make a tea scoop. In 1615, he was implicated in anti-Tokugawa plotting and forced to die by ritual disembowelment. After his death the Tokugawa family confiscated all his possessions, including his tea utensils. "It is thus safe to conclude that . . . in his service with the Tokugawa, Oribe concentrated on room designs and utensil selections befitting shogunal etiquette and respectability. The flamboyance we now associate with the Oribe style was manifested principally at his salon in Fushimi" (p. 71).

2. Shūtoku's name appears in the "Matsuya kaiki" in an entry of 1544 relating to a tea hosted in Sakai. *Chadō koten zenshū* (Anthology of classic tea texts), ed. Sen Sōshitsu, vol. 9 (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1957), p. 8.

3. This description of how to make a *chashaku* is adapted from Ikeda Hyōa, "Appreciating Teascoops," *Chanoyu Quarterly,* no. 54 (1988): 14–15.

4. Hayashiya Seizō, ed., *Cha no dōgu (2),* in *Chadō shūkin,* vol. 11 (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1983), nos. 219–21. Another extant *chashaku* by Oribe is in a matching case also made by Oribe and signed in large characters "Ko Oribe." The scoop has a deep vertical groove above the node and a sharply pointed scoop. A second case (*kaezutsu*) was provided by Kakkakusai Gensō (1678–1730), sixth head of the Omote Senke school of *chanoyu.* Sen Sōsa, *Omote Senke no chadōgu* (Tokyo: Gakken, 1994), no. 173.

5. Gifu-shi Rekishi Hakubutsukan, *Kinsei daimyo no seikatsu to bi* (Nagoya: Tokugawa Art Museum, 1985), no. 58; Nishiyama Matsunosuke, *Chashaku hyakusen* (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1991), p. 104; Kumakura Isao, ed., *Oribe, Enshū, Sōtan,* in *Chadō shūkin,* vol. 4 (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1983), nos. 15–16 (showing the box inscription by Kobori Enshū).

6. Nishiyama Matsunosuke, *Chashaku hyakusen* (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1991), pp. 106–07.

7. Hayashiya Seizō, ed., *Cha no dōgu (2),* no. 310; also Hayashiya Seizō, *Chanoyu: Japanese Tea Ceremony* (New York: Japan Society, 1979), no. 64.

8. Tokyo National Museum, *Art of the Tea Ceremony* (Tokyo: Tokyo National Museum, 1980), nos. 295-8,9.

9. Murai Yasuhiko, ed., *Sen no Rikyū,* in *Chadō Shūkin,* vol. 3 (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1983), no. 88. The story of Namida is related in Yoshimura Teiji, "The Soul of Chashaku," *Chanoyu Quarterly,* no. 21 (1978): 63–64.

Incense container *(kōgō)*

Japan, Nara period (710–794)
20th-century conversion to incense container
Cryptomeria, traces of black lacquer with gold leaf
Height 3.2, diameter 9.4 cm
F1998.22

A tea room in active use is deeply scented with the incense that is burned as prelude to each gathering. Over time the lingering scent penetrates the wooden pillars, bamboo and reed ceiling, plaster and paper walls, and mat-covered floors. One's impression of the room's intimate and dimly lit space, closely defined by the rich textures of its materials, is virtually inseparable from the traces of that austere fragrance.

The use of incense in Buddhist ritual inspired its use in the tea room. At the temple altar, the devotee offers sticks of burning incense by inserting them into a bed of ash within a ceramic or metal vessel, whereas the tea host prepares a welcome for the guests by dropping pellets of incense into the charcoal fire within the brazier or sunken hearth that heats the iron kettle of water used to make tea. The container for incense *(kōgō)* used for tea is a palm-sized lidded vessel. Chinese lacquer containers were most highly esteemed until the mid-sixteenth century, when found objects of appropriate size — such as Japanese lacquer boxes originally made as cosmetic containers — and Korean, Southeast Asian, southern Chinese, and Japanese ceramic vessels were introduced as part of the general transformation of tea taste. Even papier-mâché, decorated seashells, and exotic eggshells have been employed to hold the incense pellets.[1] Whether lofty or whimsical, rare antique or private souvenir, the *kōgō* contributes through its material and decoration to the sense of a particular event created within the host's personal domain.

The Freer incense container unites evocations of Buddhist ritual use of incense and personal memories of the ancient seat of Buddhist culture in Japan, eloquently demonstrating the role of the found object as tea utensil in preserving a fragment of the past that would be otherwise discarded as useless and therefore meaningless. In its original form, this lathe-turned knob of cryptomeria wood, protected by a thick coating of black lacquer covered with gold leaf, constituted a modest element — one of hundreds of identical ones — of the architecture of the Tōshōdaiji, one of the great temples in the ancient capital city of Nara.[2] The Tōshōdaiji was founded under imperial sponsorship in 759 by a Chinese monk, Jianzhen (688–763, Ganjin in Japanese). Ganjin went blind in the course of his arduous journey from China to Japan for the purpose of teaching the *vinaya,* the code of monastic discipline; a moving dry-lacquer portrait sculpture of the founder, seated in meditation, remains in the temple complex. The majestic, single-storied main hall of the Tōshōdaiji is the only surviving building of its type from the Nara period. Repeated repairs (including major ones carried out in the thirteenth century and during the Edo period, 1615–1868) made possible its endurance by removing and replacing weakened or rotted wooden elements. Often those old fragments were carefully preserved. The modern paulownia-wood box for the Freer incense container describes it as a door-pull taken from the original eighth-century structure. Four squared holes around the periphery of the flange were used to secure it with hand-forged nails to a larger structure. Fragments of black lacquer, flecked with gold leaf, cling precariously to the weathered grain of its surface. Possibly it was a boss on one of the massive wooden doors that formerly closed the entrance of the main hall, but only scientific testing of the wood could prove that. In the present context, the question of exact date is irrelevant.

The person responsible for commissioning the process whereby the worn boss was transformed into an incense container — by slicing off the knob, hollowing out the interior, and imbedding a shallow wooden tray into the flange — was Hosomi Ryōichi (1901–1978).[3] Hosomi's youthful visits to temples in Nara inspired him to use the wealth he eventually amassed in the woolen textile industry to build a collection centering on Buddhist art. Adopting the artistic name Kokōan (Hall of Ancient Fragrance), he also became a respected specialist on the iron kettles used for *chanoyu.* His love of metal objects extended to cloisonné-on-metal nailhead covers made for warrior mansions during the Momoyama (1573–1615) and early Edo (1615–1868) periods, and he transformed some of them into incense containers (through the addition of wooden bases), handwarmers (with metal bases), or ornaments imbedded in small two-panel folding screens meant to shelter the tea hearth.[4]

In rescuing this fragment of a Nara woodworker's craft, Hosomi honored the profound inspiration of Nara's ancient temples to his personal collecting as well as their larger importance within Japan's cultural heritage. He also continued a salvage operation begun by Japanese collectors of the Meiji era (1868–1912), who created a role for Buddhist images and ritual utensils within the tea room in order to counter the effects of government legislation that caused the dissolution of great temple collections.[5] The reincarnation of a Nara temple fragment as an incense container for the tea room makes an evocative connection between the role of incense in those two realms, investing the tea object with a "memory of incense" from its Buddhist past.

Yet another dimension of this incense container is its reverence for old wood, an attitude inseparable from the *chanoyu* environment. A seventeenth-century collection of anecdotes about the tea practice of Sen no Rikyū (1522–1591) relates: "A student of Rikyū asked what kind of room was appropriate for *chanoyu.* He answered: 'A room in which much old wood has been used for repairs.'"[6] An extreme instance of adherence to Rikyū's recommendation led to the creation, in 1886, of a one-mat tea house constructed entirely from allegedly antique fragments of wood assembled from sites of historical significance throughout Japan.[7] Old wood is often sought for the construction of a new tea room, as, for example, when architect Yoshimura Junzō and master carpenter Nakamura Sotoji incorporated

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Photo by Schecter Lee

into a tea ceremony room associated with the new Miho Museum, outside Kyoto, a cypress-wood pillar removed from Hōryūji, the seventh-century Nara temple, during repairs made in 1927.[8]

This small object, inconspicuous on its own, eloquently conveys the manner in which, since the sixteenth century at the latest, *chanoyu* has provided a way of rescuing precious but awkward objects and elevating them to a realm of conservation and connoisseurship.

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NOTES

1. Sen Sōsa, *Omote Senke no chadōgu* (Tokyo: Gakken, 1994), no. 245 (crane eggshell), no. 221 (peacock eggshell). A general discussion of the container is presented in "Chadōgu — Tea Utensils: *Kōgō*," *Chanoyu Quarterly*, no. 25 (1980): 49–61.

2. Information on the Tōshōdaiji is taken from Lucie R. Weinstein, "Tōshōdaiji," *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan*, vol. 8 (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1983), pp. 83–84; Henrik H. Sorensen, "Tōshōdaiji," *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner (London: Macmillan, 1996), 22: 502–3. The historical collections of the Tōshōdaiji, including wooden images and lacquered wooden ritual utensils of the eighth century, were presented in *Tōshōdaiji no bijitsu* (Art of the Tōshōdaiji) (Nara: Nara National Museum, 1993).

3. Conservation study suggests that new gold leaf may have been added judiciously to the piece at the time of its transformation into an incense container, in order to enhance the original application of gold leaf to the black lacquer coating.

4. Chadō Shiryōkan, *Hosomi korekushon — kama to kakemono* (Kyoto: Chadō Shiryōkan, 1997), nos. 59, 62; Chiba City Museum of Art, *The Legacy of Japanese Art* (Chiba: Chiba City Museum of Art, 1966), nos. 98–110. The Hosomi collection is now housed in a private museum, which opened in Kyoto in early 1998. On Hosomi Kokōan as collector, see also Aoyagi Eisuke, ed., *Hyakuichinin no kobijitsu* (Antique art of 101 collectors), *Bessatsu Taiyō*, no. 100 (Winter, 1997): 169–71.

5. Christine Guth, *Art, Tea, and Industry: Masuda Takashi and the Mitsui Circle* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), chapter 4, "From Temple to Tearoom," pp. 100–28.

6. *Chawa shigetsu shū* (Pointing to the moon), in Dennis Hirota, comp. and ed., *Wind in the Pines: Classic Writings of the Way of Tea as a Buddhist Path* (Fremont, Calif.: Asian Humanities Press, 1995), p. 254.

7. Henry D. Smith II, *Taizanso and the One-Mat Room* (Tokyo: International Christian University, Hachiro Yuasa Memorial Museum, 1993).

8. Filippo Salviati, "Report from Japan," *Oriental Art* 13, no. 4 (1997–98): 68.

Ariwara no Narihira Gazing at Plum Blossoms

Sumiyoshi Gukei (1631–1705)
Japan, Edo period, 1674–91
Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk
90.9 x 32.6 cm
F1997.9

The subject of this painting is the fourth episode of *Tales of Ise*, a tenth-century Japanese poetic narrative. Together with the first imperial anthology of poetry *Kokinshū* (Collection of ancient and modern Japanese poems, 905), *Tales of Ise* was regarded as an indispensable source of inspiration and instruction by poets and students of literature from the late Heian period (794–1185). Unlike the *Kokinshū*, *Tales of Ise* presents its poetry within the context of more than one hundred prose episodes linked by a very loose narrative thread. Many of its poems were taken from the *Kokinshū*. The prominence of poetry by the courtier-poet Ariwara no Narihira (825–880) in *Tales of Ise*, as well as the multiple allusions to the few known details of the poet's biography, were long taken as evidence for a now-defunct theory that posited Narihira as the author of the *Tales*. Traditional readings of the *Tales* presumed that Narihira was the unnamed protagonist in many of the episodes.[1]

The fourth episode describes an ill-fated romance between an unnamed gentleman, traditionally identified as Narihira, and a woman residing temporarily with the former empress in the eastern fifth ward of the capital. After several encounters, the woman abruptly disappears without notification or explanation. The despondent suitor attempts to console himself by an annual visit to the site of their assignations when the plum blossoms flowered in the first lunar month. The painting depicts the melancholy courtier on a veranda gazing at the plum blossoms under moonlight. The poem calligraphed in the upper half of the painting reads:

Is not the moon the same?
The spring
The spring of old?
Only this body of mine
Is the same body[2]

The poem is also found in the *Kokinshū* under Narihira's authorship.[3] Early commentators, embroidering on legend, have suggested that the lady in question was Fujiwara Kōshi (842–910), consort to Emperor Seiwa (reigned 858–76), niece of Fujiwara Yoshifusa (804–872), leader of the Fujiwara family, and that the former empress in the eastern fifth ward was Kōshi's aunt, Fujiwara Junshi, consort to Emperor Nimmyō (reigned 833–50). When Kōshi's family learned of the illicit assignation with and temporary abduction by Narihira, Fujiwara Kōshi was summarily taken from her aunt's residence to the imperial palace. Narihira's actions necessitated his temporary exile into the eastern provinces, the scene of many subsequent *Tales of Ise* episodes.[4]

The delicate evocation of sadness and transience experienced in the atmosphere of a chilled early spring evening reveals Sumiyoshi Gukei at the height of his powers. The painting is signed "Hokkyō Gukei hitsu" and impressed with an oval relief seal reading "Waga kore Sumiyoshi." Gukei received the honorary title of *hokkyō* in 1674 and the next higher title, *hōgen*, in 1691. The *hokkyō* signature thus indicates that the painting was executed during the period of sixteen or seventeen years when the artist held that title.[5]

Gukei's father was Tosa Hiromichi (1599–1670), a prominent painter of the Tosa family, whose atelier served the court. Hiromichi attended several emperors, and during the reign of Emperor Gosai (1655–63) was named official painter of the Sumiyoshi Shrine in Osaka. He subsequently took Buddhist orders, receiving the religious name of Jokei, and thereafter was known as "Sumiyoshi Jokei." Jokei's considerable talents were noted by the Edo-based shogunate, and he moved to the eastern metropolis to serve as master painter *(goyō eshi)* for the shogunate.[6]

Jokei's move was, effectively, a conscription of the court's cultural resources by the dominant political power. It served both the Sumiyoshi family and the shogunate: the new masters could avail themselves of the best of traditionally rendered court visions and press the painters' talents to nontraditional projects. And for the Sumiyoshi artists, some distance from their traditional masters was, perhaps, restorative, as their works began to reflect a fresh, adventuresome, and urbane quality. Sumiyoshi painters continued to serve the shogunate well into the nineteenth century as both painters and connoisseurs. Albeit with a name change, the Sumiyoshi painters represented a small but creatively powerful migration by the most traditional of the Japanese ateliers, the Tosa family, from Kyoto to Edo.

Jokei's son, Gukei, joined with his father on a number of important projects. Chief among them, a major memorial project, the pictorial biography of Tokugawa Ieyasu *(Tōshōgū engi)*, was completed in 1665. Like his father, Gukei was a consummate stylist in the old tradition, capable of evoking the most delicate of emotions, either with brief allusion or by marshaling an array of color and detail. Gukei widened the family's traditional thematic interests, exploring genre to such a degree that he is sometimes associated with the early ukiyo-e painters. Gukei also held high rank, being named private painting master *(oku eshi)* to the shogun.[7]

Gukei's rendering of Ariwara no Narihira breathes fresh and believable passion into an ancient symbol of amorous pursuit and frequent heartbreak. The finely brushed and delicately colored image is presented as a vertical composition of carefully balanced sharp-angled and rounded shapes. Architectural and clothing elements stand together with the natural forms of plant, planet, and the human figure. This balance is Gukei's skillfull adaptation of time-honored Tosa convention: the use of a visual code indicating the perpetual conflict between social norms and natural passions.[8]

Paintings by Jokei and Gukei are rare in Western collections. *The Story of the Princess of the Uji Bridge* (F69.24), a well-known narrative painting by Jokei in the Freer Gallery of Art, is now complemented by his son's equally forceful work.[9] The paintings serve as significant examples of the early seventeenth-century embrace of the traditional court aesthetic by new and powerful patrons.

James T. Ulak

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PUBLISHED

Suntory Museum of Art, *Edo no Yamato-e: Sumiyoshi Jokei-Gukei* (Edo painting in the Yamato-e style: Sumiyoshi Jokei and Gukei) (Tokyo: Suntory Museum of Art, 1985), p. 56; Tokyo National Museum, *Tokubetsu ten — Yamato-e: Miyabi no keifu* (The special exhibition — Yamato-e: A lineage of elegance) (Tokyo: Tokyo National Museum, 1993), pp. 221, 279.

NOTES

1. Helen Craig McCullough, trans., *Tales of Ise: Lyric Episodes from Tenth-Century Japan* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1968). McCullough's introduction (pp. 3–65) provides an excellent summary of the theories of authorship, a history of the text, and the cultural importance of *Tales of Ise.* Most editions of *Tales of Ise* are based on the edition produced by Fujiwara Teika (1162–1241), containing 125 episodes and 209 poems. In her translation, McCullough includes an additional 18 episodes not found in the Teika edition.

2. Reprinted from *Tales of Ise,* translated, with an introduction and notes, by Helen Craig McCullough, with the permission of the publishers, Stanford University Press. © 1986 by the Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Junior University *Tales of Ise.* Stanford, 1968, p. 71. The calligrapher of the poem in Gukei's painting has not been identified.

3. See Helen Craig McCullough, trans., *Kokin Wakashū: The First Imperial Anthology of Japanese Poetry* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1985), poem 747.

4. McCullough, trans., *Tales of Ise,* pp. 45–46.

5. Suntory Museum of Art, *Edo no Yamato-e: Sumiyoshi Jokei-Gukei* (Edo painting in the Yamato-e style: Sumiyoshi Jokei and Gukei) (Tokyo: Suntory Museum of Art, 1985), pp. 72–75. *Hokkyō* (bridge of the law), *hōgen* (eye of the law), and *hōin* (seal of the law), in ascending order of importance, were honorary ecclesiastical ranks originally reserved for monks but later given to sculptors and painters.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Helen Mitsu Nagata, "Images of the Tales of Ise," in *Word in Flower: The Visualization of Classical Literature in Seventeenth-Century Japan,* ed. Carolyn Wheelwright (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Art Gallery, 1989), pp. 54–83. Nagata's essay treats the importance and stylistic variety of *Tales of Ise* images in the seventeenth-century revival of courtly themes. Examples of more traditional renderings provide informative contrasts to Gukei's interpretation.

9. An early Freer acquisition, a Buddhist painting featuring the Shaka Triad, is attributed to Gukei (F05.98).

Freshwater jar for the tea ceremony (*mizusashi*)

Nonomura Ninsei (active ca. 1646–77)
Japan, Kyoto, Omuro kiln, Edo period, mid-17th century
Stoneware with iron and rice-straw, ash glazes
Height 20.1, width 18.6, diameter 15.1 cm
F1998.8ab

Together with Tanaka Chōjirō (died 1589), founder of the Raku workshop, Hon'ami Kōetsu (1558–1637), the first and greatest amateur potter, and Ogata Kenzan (1663–1743), master of the literary mode in ceramic decor, Nonomura Ninsei figures in the handful of Japanese ceramic artists who are known by name and have exerted the most profound and lasting influence on the development of Japanese ceramics.[1] Notably, all these known artists worked in Kyoto, the imperial seat as well as the national center for the production and marketing of high-quality crafts. Although they did not meet one another and their social backgrounds varied greatly, their professional paths overlapped closely: Kōetsu relied upon the Raku workshop to fire his hand-sculpted tea bowls, while Ninsei's workshop manual, preserved by Kenzan, shows Ninsei's interest in Raku technology.[2] Similarly, their respective bodies of work are closely allied in reflecting the passion of Kyoto connoisseurs — their foremost clients — for tea ceremony ceramics as an expression of personal taste, for the glorification of pottery processes in the finished product, and for richly referential objects quoting from historical ceramics as well as from other media. As demonstrated clearly in this tea ceremony water jar, Ninsei's work, in particular, refashions diverse ceramic models from Japan, Korea, and China in accordance with refined Kyoto taste, unifying them in a harmonious family of flawless forms and meticulous glazes.

Nonomura Sei'emon is said to have been born in Tamba Province and to have trained in pottery techniques in Seto as well as at existing workshops in eastern Kyoto before becoming independent in the 1640s.[3] He was one of the many provincial potters who were recruited for the burgeoning new ceramics industry in Kyoto, but his skills quickly won him a position of prominence. Setting up a pottery workshop on land belonging to the court-affiliated temple Ninnaji, located in the Omuro district of northwest Kyoto, he received permission to incorporate the character *nin* from the temple's name into an elegant-sounding studio name, Ninsei. Oval seals bearing this name are impressed on the bases of his products. Ninsei also benefited from the patronage of the warrior and influential tea master

Fig. 1. Tea ceremony water jar, Karatsu ware, Japan, Momoyama period (1573–1615), stoneware with iron and rice-straw ash glazes, lacquered wooden lid, height 15.8, width 24.5, diameter 14.2 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, gift of Charles Lang Freer, F98.457

Kanamori Sōwa (1584–1656), who promoted the potter's work in elite circles.[4] Ninsei was among the first Kyoto potters to master overglaze enamels, using a rich palette accented by gold and silver to render designs that are said to have been supplied by Kano Tan'yū (1602–1674), an official artist for the Tokugawa shogunate, and other prominent painters. After Ninsei died in the 1670s and his son took over the workshop, the quality of the products declined sharply, and the kiln ceased to operate by the end of the century. Nonetheless, Ninsei's ceramics set an enduring standard for elite tea ceremony ware and to the present day have been imitated faithfully in Kyoto workshops.

This tea ceremony water jar represents Ninsei's unsurpassed skill in reinterpreting established ceramic styles, particularly the massive, rustic wares from provincial Japanese kilns that had dominated tea ceremony ceramics during the Momoyama period (1573–1615), which he transformed into polished statements of visual and intellectual complexity. The prototype for this jar is a type of tea ceremony ceramic with brown and white glazes, including water jars, vases, sake flasks, and serving bowls, found among both Karatsu and Takatori wares made at kilns in northern Kyushu in the early decades of the seventeenth century. Documentary records and excavation of such vessels from residential and market sites in Kyoto attest to their popularity there. Two Karatsu-ware vessels in the collection of the Freer Gallery of Art (fig. 1, also F05.274) show how the lower half of such vessels was dipped into opaque white, rice-straw ash glaze and the upper half into a translucent brown glaze mixed from wood ash and iron-bearing clay. (On some other pieces the positions of the white and brown glazes are reversed.) During firing the brown glaze ran down into the white in numerous irregular streaks.

In his version of the two-color style, Ninsei controlled the interaction of the two glazes by dipping the jar at an angle, first into brown glaze, then into white, creating crisp swags of glaze against the reddish body.[5] Where the glazes overlap, they run

Fig. 2. Vase, Iga ware, Japan, Momoyama period (1573–1615), stoneware with natural wood-ash glaze, iron glaze, and gold lacquer repairs, height 28.8, diameter 15.4 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, gift of Charles Lang Freer, F98.451

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together like a melting chocolate sundae. The vessel form itself is not the heavy cylinder typical of Kyushu wares but a thinly thrown double gourd with gently bulging walls, whose swollen base echoes the massive plinths on which many Momoyama period vases and water jars rested (fig. 2). The leaf-shaped lugs, serving no purpose other than to establish the "front" and "back" of the vessel, are typical of Kyoto ceramics in their use of naturalistic shapes to replace what had originated, on utilitarian ceramics, as functional loops.

The site of Ninsei's Omuro workshop was rediscovered early in this century. Sherds collected there, including the lid of a water jar with brown and white glazes, are now on deposit in the Tokyo and Kyoto National Museums.[6] These sherds are important in authenticating extant Ninsei pieces and providing an accurate understanding of the dimensions of Ninsei's activities. While his enameled pieces are most often cited, the sherds verify that his eclectic reinterpretations of established ceramic styles constituted the bulk of his production. This facet of his work is also demonstrated by three other of his pieces in the Freer Gallery: a tea-leaf storage jar with Seto-style brown glaze (F64.1), a Shigaraki-style wastewater jar (F11.397), and a freshwater jar with Kyushu-style white rice-straw ash glaze (F02.71). An enamel-decorated black-glazed tea bowl (F98.466) and a rabbit-shaped incense pellet container (F04.203) are now thought to be close copies.

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Mitsuoka Tadanari and the Zauho Press, eds., *Edo (1), Sekai Tōji Zenshū*, vol. 6 (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1975), no. 133; *Nonomura Ninsei ten* (Nonomura Ninsei exhibition) (Kanazawa and Atami: Ishikawa Prefectural Museum of Art and MOA, 1992), no. 101; *Mizusashi* (Tea ceremony water jars) (Kyoto: Chadō Shiryōkan, 1995), no. 62.

NOTES

1. The names of other great potters who made unsigned tea ceremony ceramics at regional kilns in Mino (see Black Seto tea bowl, F1998.15), Bizen (see freshwater jar F1998.17), Shigaraki, Iga, and various locations in Kyushu in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries are not recorded or else cannot be associated with extant objects.

2. Richard L. Wilson, *The Art of Ogata Kenzan: Persona and Production in Japanese Ceramics* (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1991), p. 224.

3. Ninsei's notes for Seto-type clay body and glazes also appear in the notebook handed down to Kenzan. Ibid., pp. 219–23.

4. A letter written by Sōwa in 1653 to a high-ranking government official in Edo asks how many Omuro-ware tea caddies and tea bowls the official would like to order, cautioning that he should decide quickly as the kiln is filling up in preparation for the next firing. Kumakura Isao, ed., *Oribe, Enshū, Sōtan*, in *Chādo shūkin*, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1983), p. 237.

5. The brown glaze on this jar, smooth and even in color, is the type of glaze Ninsei also used on tea caddies. It was formulated so as not to run uncontrollably. Ninsei's workshop manual includes his formula for "Karatsu-style clay," made from a mixture of local clays. Wilson, *Art of Ogata Kenzan*, p. 219.

6. *Nonomura Ninsei ten* (Nonomura Ninsei exhibition) (Kanazawa and Atami: Ishikawa Prefectural Museum of Art and MOA, 1992), plate 125.

Tale of Shuten Dōji

Paintings by Kano Shōun (1637–1702)
Calligraphy by Imperial Prince Fushiminomiya Kuninaga (1676–1726), Nakayama Atsuchika (1656–1716), and Higashizono Motokazu (1653–1710)
Japan, Edo period, 1700
Three handscrolls; ink, color, gold, and silver on silk
Scroll I: 37.6 x 2053.3; scroll II: 37.6 x 2340.4; scroll III: 37.5 x 2396.1 cm
F1998.26.1–.3

The colorful tale of the killing of Shuten Dōji, a giant who lived in a mountain fortress, periodically kidnapping and devouring young noblewomen from Kyoto, was a favorite subject of painters of the Edo period. Set in the tenth century, during the Heian period (794–1185) when Japanese culture flourished under the patronage of the imperial court, the story celebrates the exploits of the warrior Minamoto no Yorimitsu (948–1021), popularly known as Raikō. Two variants of the story, known as the *Tale of Shuten Dōji* of Ōeyama (Mount Ōe) or of Ibukiyama (Mount Ibuki), are known. The story first appeared in Japanese illlustrated handscrolls as early as the fourteenth century and became a subject of screen painting in the seventeenth century.[1] An important pair of screens featuring a detailed pictorial version of the subject was acquired by the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in 1988. Painters of the Kano school were particularly adept at rendering this popular subject, and most Kano versions follow a more or less standard sequence of illustrations based on the version by Kano Motonobu (1476–1559). The paintings of the three handscrolls attributed to Kano Motonobu reveal his study of the elaborate, richly colored style developed among official painters for the imperial court such as Takashina Takakane (flourished early 14th century)[2] This elegant, polished style of painting is faithfully followed by Kano Shōun in the Freer handscrolls. Patronized by powerful sponsors such as shoguns and members of the imperial court, Kano school artists received outstanding technical training and had access to important private collections for study. They specialized in highly refined and technically superb, albeit conservative styles and subjects of Chinese- and Japanese-style painting. Models and copies of earlier works by early Kano masters and other important painters thus had a notable role in their training and in the production of commissioned work in their studios.

The detailed inscriptions at the end of the third scroll provide valuable data concerning the production of this set of scrolls. The painter, Kano Shōun, notes that he has followed Kano Motonobu's prototype for his work. He signs with his honorific title, Hokkyō (literally, "Bridge of the [Buddhist] Law"), a Buddhist ecclesiastical title that was granted to artists as well.

Shōun's signature is followed by a colophon written by an imperial court official and dated the first third of the third lunar month of the thirteenth year of the Genroku era, or 1700. The colophon provides details concerning the names and titles of the three calligraphers who wrote the twenty-nine segments of text that precede each illustration in the three scrolls. Imperial Prince Fushiminomiya Kuninaga is identified as the writer of the first section of text in scroll I. The prince held high rank within the imperial family, having married a daughter of Retired Emperor Reigen (1654–1732; reigned 1663–87) in 1698, just two years before completion of this set of scrolls. The prince also held the office of Nakatsukasa-chō (Chief of the Ministry of Central Affairs). The prince's father-in-law, Emperor Reigen, a patron and practitioner of literature, painting, and calligraphy, fostered participation by members of the imperial court in these activities. Sections two through four of scroll I and all of scroll II were written by Major Counsellor (Dainagon) Nakayama Atsuchika, and sections five through eight of scroll I and all of scroll III were written by Major Counsellor (Dainagon) Higashizono Motokazu (1653–1710). In keeping with established imperial court custom for participation of high-ranking individuals in production of a calligraphic work, the highest ranking individual writes the first scroll or section of the work, followed by others in order of rank. The inclusion of all three calligraphers in scroll I emphasizes the importance of their collaboration in the lengthy project.

The participation of such elite members of the imperial court and a senior painter of the Kano school in the production of these scrolls strongly suggests that they were commissioned, perhaps as a gift, for a member of the imperial family or the shogunate. The scrolls, each more than twenty meters long, present an exceptionally elaborate and luxurious treatment of the subject. Written and painted on silk, rather than on the usual paper, the scrolls are ornately decorated with silver and gold underpaintings of flowers, birds, trees, and landscapes in the sections where text is written. The painted sections, of widely varying length, include many passages such as garden scenes and travel sequences that would be abbreviated or eliminated for economy in a less extravagant version. These were included to enhance the experience of viewing the scrolls with lyrical interludes between the main scenes.

Handscroll paintings demanded considerable resources to produce. They required many times the material of most single hanging paintings, and considerable expertise and cooperation among painters, decorators, calligraphers, and finally mounters to assemble the sheets into scrolls. Even with the use of model books or sketches for the composition of the main paintings, the painstaking completion and application of the thick mineral colors, gold, and silver would require months or even years. When completed, the paintings were privately viewed by an individual or a small group.

With their outstanding paintings and calligraphy and their documented relationship to the imperial court, these scrolls are a distinguished addition to the Freer Gallery of Art's superb collection of Japanese narrative handscrolls — one of the finest outside Japan. The *Tale of Shuten Dōji* will be the first major set of narrative handscrolls by a Kano artist in the Freer collection; their excellent and complete state of preservation provides an important document of the enduring legacy of Kano Motonobu's illustrations of the story in the mid-Edo period.

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Detail, F1998.26.1

Detail, F1998.26.3

These scrolls will also enhance the museum's holdings of Edo period narrative paintings. Narrative handscrolls of this period have not been extensively represented in the collection, which ranges in date from the thirteenth to the nineteenth century.

Ann Yonemura

NOTES

1. For extensive discussion of screens of the Shuten Dōji story, see Quitman Eugene Phillips, "The Price Shuten Dōji Screen," *Ars Orientalis*, 26 (1996),: 1–21.

2. See Sakakibara Satoru, "Santori Bijutsukanbon 'Shuten dōji emaki' o megutte, I" (Illustrated scrolls of *Shuten dōji* in the Suntory Art Museum, part I), *Kokka* 1076 (1984): 7–26; II (part II), *Kokka* 1077 (1984): 33–61, for a detailed discussion of the set of three scrolls attributed to Kano Motonobu. The set of three scrolls acquired by the Freer Gallery of Art have many paintings that are compositionally and stylistically similar to the Suntory scrolls. See also Miyeko Murase, *Tales of Japan: Scrolls and Prints from the New York Public Library* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), for a discussion of a set of three handscrolls in a contrasting style painted by Kaihō Yūchiku (1654–1728).

Landscape

Soga Shōhaku (1730–1781)
Japan, Edo period, ca. 1760s
Two-panel folding screen (originally sliding door panels, *fusuma*); ink on paper
179.1 x 273.1 cm
F1995.18

Eighteenth-century Japan was notable for increasing numbers of bold and independent artistic talents who abandoned the traditional hereditary atelier systems, sought eclectic training, and crafted highly personalized visions in their art. Itō Jakuchū (1716–1800), Nagasawa Rosetsu (1754–1799), and Soga Shōhaku are three artists who, though quite diverse in forms of expression, are often linked by virtue of their independence from enveloping studio organizations. Independence notwithstanding, Jakuchū maintained connections with a circle of artists associated with and influenced by Ōbaku Zen, and Rosetsu, who trained with Maruyama Ōkyo (1733–1795), remained in close contact with his master throughout his career. Of the three, Shōhaku alone stands out as a determined individualist in both his art and his lifestyle.

Little is known of Shōhaku. His birth and death dates are calculated from the record of a no longer extant painting. According to that record, Shōhaku produced a painting of the *Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove* for Sairaiji, a temple in the city of Tsu in Ise Province. On the painting Shōhaku inscribed his age, twenty-nine, and the date of execution, 1758. Contemporary records are consistent in their description of a highly eccentric, even slightly deranged personality, whose works included both boldly brushed expressions and polished, meticulously rendered paintings.[1]

Even Shōhaku's assumption of the sobriquet Soga was a deliberate attempt to underscore his eccentricity by claiming stylistic and spiritual ancestry with a painting tradition known for unrelentingly intense and challenging ink monochrome images. Founded by Soga Dasoku (?–1483) in the fifteenth century, the line of Soga artists served the Asakura warrior clan in Echizen Province on the Japan Sea and had strong ties to the Kyoto Zen temple of Daitokuji, especially during the tenure of the renowned Zen master Ikkyū Sōjun (1394–1481). Soga artists' renderings of fierce birds of prey are echoed in a number of Shōhaku's works. The Soga also claimed lineage from the Korean immigrant painter Yi Chuman (J. Ri Shūbun) (fl. mid-fifteenth century), and certain stylistic elements seen within the paintings of the school suggest Korean influence. This feature of the Soga legend must have appealed to Shōhaku's understanding of himself as an outsider.[2]

Shōhaku's thematic interests were derived largely from Chinese legend. Shōhaku's figures feature Daoist immortals, Zen adepts, scholars, and others noted for their eccentricity, stern moral standards, and independence from social norms. Shōhaku's landscape paintings contain the standard elements of Chinese paintings, but both figures and landscape, although Chinese in origin, seem to have passed through the interpretive filter of seventeenth-century Japanese Kano and Unkoku school painters.

Shōhaku seems to have been born in Kyoto to a merchant family and possibly orphaned in his late teens. He is thought to have studied under Takada Keiho (1674–1755), a Kano-trained but highly individualistic painter. Keiho was said to have preferred the provinces to Kyoto, and it was perhaps from this master that Shōhaku's itinerant life received impetus. The majority of Shōhaku's works have appeared in the provinces of Ise and Harima (respectively, present-day Mie and Hyōgo Prefectures).[3]

The painting seen here was originally created for a pair of sliding door panels (*fusuma*). It was later remounted as a two-fold screen. Oval repair marks visible at the extreme right and left sides of the composition indicate where hardware was affixed to assist in opening and closing the panels. A dramatic topography features a complex and dominant rock formation in the left foreground and a sudden recession into distant space on the right. On the left, sheer cliffs and a waterfall plunge through a channel worn in the cliff by the water. On the right, a slightly more hospitable terrain provides a base for several structures that seem to be scholars' hermitages or villas. In the left foreground a lone figure on a donkey crosses a bridge at the base of the waterfall. He is followed at a distance by a servant who travels on foot and carries his master's stringed musical instrument, the *chin*. The image refers to a standard Chinese subject: a literatus journeying to seek the company of kindred spirits in their mountain retreats. The scale of the natural world overwhelms the small human forms.

Indeed, the haunting, animate quality of the natural world is Shōhaku's true subject. While human figures and architecture are schematically rendered in unsurprising ways, it is in the quirky and characteristic depiction of the rocks, trees, and water that the artist creates a fantastic landscape which seems on the verge of exploding from within. The trees provide the most recognizable of Shōhaku's signature forms. Trunks are shaped like large stalks of looming mushrooms, tapering from an exaggerated broad base to a sharp peak. The trees and other natural features such as rocks and cliffs project an inner source of illumination, an effect achieved by dark outlining and shading around forms while selected central elements of the tree remain untouched by ink. This carefully applied reverse shading technique conveys a preternatural sense of force generating from within the normally inanimate aspects of nature. Any interest in the narrative of the scholar's journey is superseded by the portentous sense of mystery emanating from the world through which he passes.

Similar subject and general compositional features are seen in several important Shōhaku paintings.[4] *Landscape* is signed "Soga Shōhaku ga" and is impressed with a square relief seal reading "Shōhaku" and a square intaglio seal reading "Soga Kiyū."

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This evidence, together with the brushwork, when compared with extant works suggests the decade of the 1760s as a possible period of production. In addition to temple commissions, Shōhaku painted for private clients and probably bartered services in return for lodging. The physical condition of *Landscape* suggests that the *fusuma* were placed in a well-used room, perhaps a commercial establishment, and may be yet another example of a work created by the artist for services in kind.

An early Freer Gallery of Art acquisition, the ink monochrome painting of *Gama the Daoist Immortal* (F04.192) is an excellent example of Shōhaku's treatment of eccentric legendary figures. The acquistion of *Landscape* now enhances the Freer collection with another important Shōhaku subject, one rendered in commanding scale.

James T. Ulak

NOTES

1. Nerima kuritsu bijutsu kan, (Nerima Prefectural Museum of Art), *Soga Shōhaku ten* (Soga Shōhaku exhibition) (Tokyo: Tokyo Shimbun, 1987), unpaginated chronological table. See also Kanō Hiroyuki, *Soga Shōhaku,* in *Nihon no Bijutsu,* no. 258 (Tokyo: Shibundo, 1987), p. 27.

2. Kanō Hiroyuki and Yokoi Tadanori, *Shōhaku,* in *Suibokuga no kyoshō,* (Masters of ink painting) vol. 8 (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1994), pp. 37–41, 90–97.

3. Ibid., pp. 94–96.

4. See "Getsuya sansui zu byōbu" (The Getsuya folding screen landscape painting) in ibid., pp. 32–33; "Kyū Nagashima ke fusuma-e" (The Nagashima family sliding door painting) in Nerima kuritsu bijutsu kan, *Soga Shōhaku ten,* plate 67.

Zen aphorism

Hakuin Ekaku (1685–1768)
Japan, Edo period, 1760
Hanging scroll, ink on paper
100.3 x 27.9 cm
F1998.77

Hakuin Ekaku was one of the great charismatic figures in the history of Japanese Buddhism. In the last several decades of his long life, he created a vast number of paintings and calligraphed text renderings, most often in ink monochrome, as a means of expressing the ineffable truths of Zen. His intention was to create bold, honest, and often humorous forms that would inspire and inform those at all levels of society who searched for enlightenment. At least one thousand of Hakuin's works are still extant.

The work seen here is stylistically and thematically consistent with works produced by Hakuin in the latter half of his eighth decade. The seal impressions reading "Kokantei," "Ekaku," and "Hakuin," as well as their positioning, are also observed in other works of that period. The text proclaims:

> Through the piercing discipline
> the ancients grew illustrious[1]

Hakuin quotes from a response attributed to the Chinese master Tzu-ming (known in Japan as Jimyō; 987–1040) when asked about his practice of piercing his thigh with a gimlet to stave off drowsiness and sleep during meditation.[2] The matter-of-fact reference to severe physical discipline in the pursuit of enlightenment is thoroughly consistent with Hakuin's pragmatic approach and, in a larger sense, an operative principle of Rinzai sect Zen.

Hakuin was a priest of the Rinzai sect, which was brought to Japan by Eisai (1141–1215) and emphasized an active, *kanna Zen* or "*koan* introspection Zen" (as opposed to the *mokushō* Zen, or "silent illumination Zen" of the Sōtō sect). Rinzai praxis was based on a very active master-disciple relationship, which included solving of *koan*, or Zen riddles, and intense meditation.

The fragmentary quotation from Tzu-ming was used by Hakuin on other occasions, and it is instructive to compare the work seen here with other published examples to note the multiple variations of calligraphic rendering used by one artist to express the same text.[3] In this example, elements of the ideograms are exaggerated to suggest sharp points or blades, thus reinforcing the dramatically uncompromising message of the text. The application of ink is, in various instances, overlaid rather than achieved in a single stroke, thus giving a dimensional effect. Hakuin seems to have employed the same technique used by contemporaneous painters of the Rimpa school.

The severity expressed by Hakuin was never masochistic but a manifestation of his driven enthusiasm for achieving a goal. His intensity resulted in the near total collapse of his health. The humor so evident in the calligraphy and painting of his later years perhaps signified a coming to terms with the human frailty he initially sought to conquer. His pragmatism, humor, and drive embraced all other Buddhist sects as well as Shinto, the indigenous religious practice. Hakuin sought to present Zen practice as efficacious within the realities of everyday life experienced by all social classes. While uncompromising in presenting the fundamental requirements of Zen, Hakuin freed Rinzai Zen from the image of a cloistered or solely clerical practice.[4]

Buddhism of the Edo period (1615–1868) had been co-opted by the Tokugawa shogunate and adeptly employed as a mechanism to promote centralized government control. The arrival of Christian missionaries in the final decades of the sixteenth century galvanized some Buddhists into aggressive reaction to the foreign faith. By the 1640s, the government had expelled Christian missionaries and issued prohibitions against Christianity, sensing this faith as a harbinger of colonization by the European powers. As an additional security policy, the shogunate required that all Japanese hold a certificate of temple membership (*tera-uke*). This and related policies vastly expanded the number of nominal Buddhist faithful and required the creation of many more temples.[5] Thus Buddhism of the early Edo period was prosperous but lacked the fundamental vitality that characterized the great periods of evangelism or reform of the early Heian (794–1185) and Kamakura (1185–1333) periods.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, two forces re-ignited, to some extent, the spiritual purposes of Japanese Buddhism. One was the arrival of Chinese monks of the Ōbaku Zen sect seeking asylum from the Manchu rulers after the collapse of the Ming dynasty by 1644. The other was a reform movement within the Rinzai sect of Zen Buddhism led by Hakuin. Ōbaku Zen temples served the time-honored function of transmitting both religious teaching and the most current aspects of continental culture. By reaffirming the uses of calligraphy and painting as important aspects of religious praxis, Ōbaku Zen attracted numerous intellectuals and artists to its gates. On a more popular level, Hakuin seemed to tap a similar vein of appeal.

Hakuin was born in the Shizuoka area of south-central Honshu and, except for a brief tenure as administrator at the major Kyoto Rinzai temple complex of Myōshinji, was either traveling or active in the temples of his home province. In a period of increasing government control of religion, it is remarkable that a man of Hakuin's vast talents generally was able to avoid national positions of ecclesiastical permanence and prominence.

This Hakuin calligraphy complements another of his works, an image of the Zen patriarch Daruma (FSC-PA-191) (traditionally ca. 470–543), in the Freer Gallery of Art Study Collection. In a broader sense, this work enhances an excellent Freer collection grouping of Ōbaku Zen calligraphy and painting by both Japanese and Chinese monks. These works are generally contemporaneous with the Hakuin calligraphy and evidence the strong revival of the practice of employing the ink monochrome brush as a Zen tool of enlightenment.

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John Stevens and Alice Rae Yelen, *Zenga: Brushstrokes of Enlightenment* (New Orleans: New Orleans Museum of Art, 1990), p. 169.

NOTES

1. Translation by John Stevens, in John Stevens and Alice Rae Yelen, *Zenga: Brushstrokes of Enlightenment* (New Orleans: New Orleans Museum of Art, 1990), p. 168. With permission of the New Orleans Museum of Art ©1990.

2. Ibid.

3. Takeuchi Naotsugu, *Hakuin* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1962), p. 158, plate 237.

4. For excellent biographies of Hakuin, see Heinrich Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism: A History,* vol. 2, *Japan,* trans. James W. Heisig and Paul Knitter (New York: Macmillan, 1990), pp. 367–99; Stephen Addiss, *The Art of Zen: Paintings and Calligraphy by Japanese Monks, 1600–1925* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989), pp. 102–29.

5. Joseph Kitagawa, *Religion in the History of Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), pp. 163–65. Kitagawa observes, for example, that the number of temples increased from 13,037 in the Kamakura period (1185–1333) to 469,934 during the period of Tokugawa rule (1615–1868).

Cranes

Itō Jakuchū (1716–1800)
Japan, Edo period, ca. 1780s
Hanging scroll, diptych; ink and color on paper
Each 145.3 x 66.4 cm
F1997.25.1–.2

Two cranes, alert and variously postured, are the subject of this recently discovered diptych by Itō Jakuchū. Unsigned but impressed with a square intaglio seal reading "Tō Jokin-in" and a round relief seal reading "Jakuchū koji," the paintings suggest a production date in the decade of the 1780s. They are considered to be particularly fine examples of Jakuchū's late maturity. Jakuchū, the careful observer of nature, presents the bird in two distinct species: on the left, a white-napped crane *(J. mana tsuru; L. Grus vipio)* with fanned dark plumage stands beneath a rock outcropping, and on the right, a red-crowned Japanese crane *(J. tanchō tsuru; L. Grus japonensis)* surrounded by fantastically large chrysanthemums is balanced in languorous midstride. The paintings are rendered in ink monochrome, with the exception of a small touch of red pigment near the eye of the white-napped crane.[1]

Jakuchū's long fascination with pairs is skillfully manifest. Both physical and stylistic evidence suggests that the paintings are in their original format. The paintings are executed on paper of unusually large size, precluding the possibility that they were used as panels in a folding screen. In addition, features of composition and complementary brush techniques emphasize a natural union of the two paintings, making it unlikely that they were formerly elements of a triptych. The artist's trademark use of bold diagonals joins the images. Similar ink techniques applied in the articulation of chrysanthemum blossoms and plumage on the white-napped crane underscore the visual unity.

The crane is a recurrent subject in Jakuchū's oeuvre. The birds here are instructively compared to renderings of cranes found in a series of fifty paintings produced to decorate sliding door panels of Dai-shoin within Rokuonji (Kinkakuji), popularly known as the Temple of the Golden Pavilion, Kyoto, about 1760. Considered the ink monochrome masterpieces of the artist's early years, these paintings show, among other subjects, cranes described in relatively naturalistic terms.[2] The artist's movement, over several decades, to a boldly abstract style is clearly evident in *Cranes.* These birds are rendered essentially as large ellipses, with feathering and appendages described in brilliant displays of brushwork and manipulation of varied ink tones.

Jakuchū, who was heir to and, for a time, proprietor of Masugen, a prominent green grocery in the Nishiki market of central Kyoto, studied painting as an avocation. The Kano school–trained painter Ōoka Shumboku (1680–1763) seems to have been an early mentor. In the nearly half-century of his documentable productivity, virtually all of Jakuchū's art found patronage or inspiration in relation to Zen Buddhism. His associations were initially through the tutelage of Daiten Kenjō (1719–1801), scholar-monk of the Rinzai Zen temple of Shōkokuji. Indeed, it was for this temple that Jakuchū's most famous ensemble of paintings, *Dōshoku sai-e* (Colorful realm of living beings), was produced (ca. 1755–65). The association with Shōkokuji, by virtue of its own collections and with connections to collections housed throughout the capital, provided Jakuchū with access to vast resource material, particularly of Chinese painting, both polychrome and ink monochrome. After the completion of the *Dōshoku sai-e* project, Jakuchū developed an increasingly close relationship to Ōbaku Zen.

Ōbaku represented the most recent wave of Buddhist immigration from China in the early seventeenth century. Similar to the extensive Chinese Zen Buddhist influx to Japan in the thirteenth century precipitated by the Mongol takeover of China, the Ōbaku monks fled to Japan when the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) fell to the Manchu. Beyond its role as a religious sect, Ōbaku served as a vehicle of the latest developments in Ming culture, particularly in literature and the arts. A nucleus of important Japanese artists in the *nanga,* or literati, movement were nourished by their contact with Ōbaku. Jakuchū gradually entered this orbit and, in doing so, dramatically increased his interest in and production of ink monochrome paintings. This focus was due in large part to his exposure to the works in Ōbaku collections, but may also have reflected a literati prejudice that viewed lavish polychrome works as crassly professional pandering to low-brow tastes rather than reflective of the loftier scholar-painter tradition. From about 1776, Jakuchū became increasingly reclusive and spent much time devoted to a project at Sekihōji, an Ōbaku Zen temple at Fukakusa, just south of Kyoto. Jakuchū created the design for a diorama of stone sculptures featuring the five hundred *arhat,* or disciples of the Buddha, sited on a hill adjacent to the temple. Jakuchū financed the sculpture production through the sale of paintings, and the proliferation of the somewhat less labor intensive ink monochrome paintings during this period may have been driven by his economic needs. The sculptural ensemble was a popular pilgrimage destination, and woodblock prints of the period give some sense of the original configuration. Natural disaster and plundering have greatly reduced the size of the diorama.[3]

Cranes complement another Jakuchū painting in the Freer Gallery of Art, a small two-fold polychrome screen featuring chrysanthemums on a gold background (F80.198). Together, they provide the Freer collection with strong and diverse expressions of Jakuchū's evolving vision of nature.

James T. Ulak

NOTES

1. Kōno Motoaki, "Itō Jakuchū hitsu tsuru zu sōfuku" (A pair of crane paintings by Itō Jakuchi), *Kokka,* no. 1225 (November 1997): 23–25.

2. Kobayashi Tadashi, Tsuji Nobuo, and Yamakawa Takeshi, *Jakuchū, Shōhaku, Rosetsu,* in *Suiboku Bijutsu Taikei,* vol. 14 (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1977), p. 49.

3. Money Hickman and Sato Yasuhiro, *The Paintings of Jakuchū* (New York: Abrams, 1989), pp. 16–32. See also Tsuji Nobuo, *Jakuchū* (Tokyo: Bijutsu Shuppansha, 1974), pp. 177–93.

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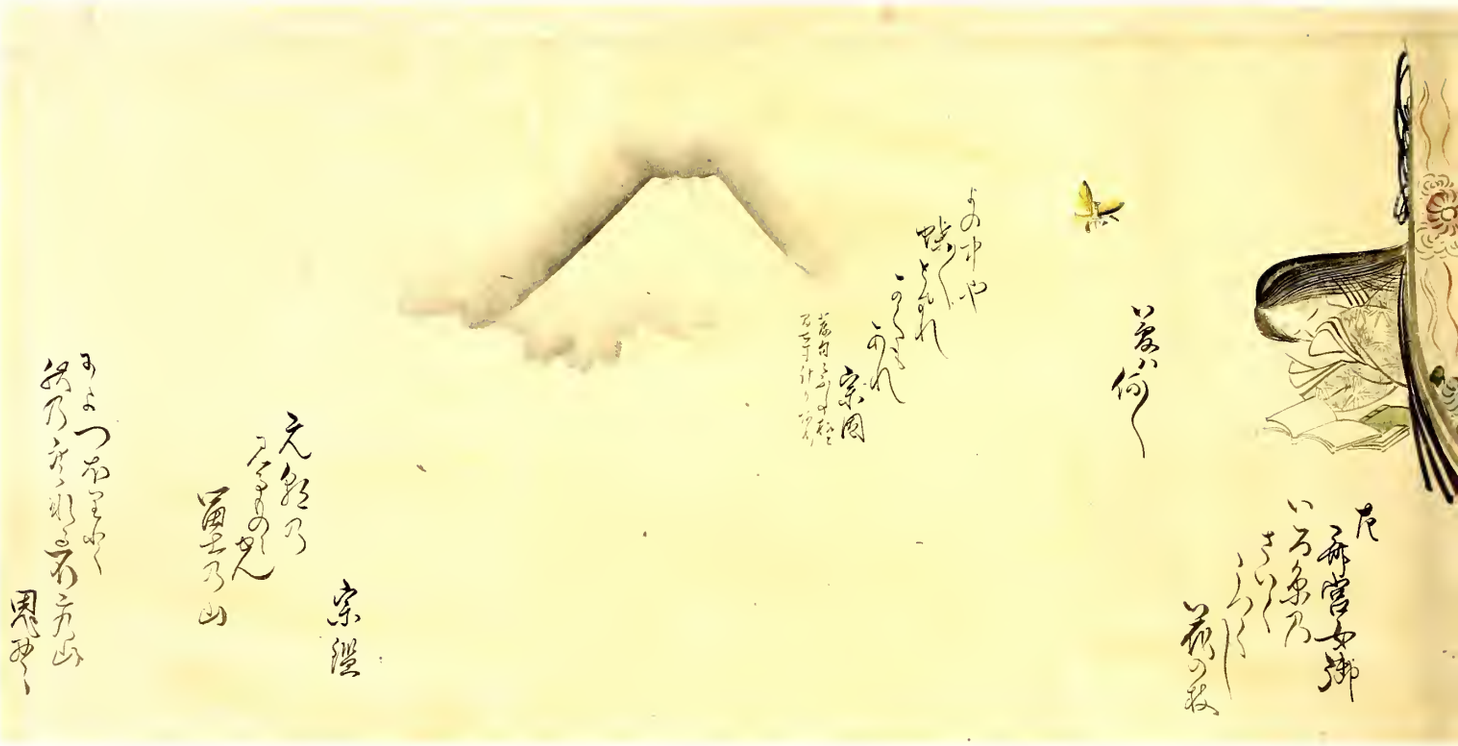
Thirty-six Immortal Poets at Leisure



Matsumura Goshun (1752–1811)
Japan, Edo period, 1781–1811
Horizontal scroll, ink and color on paper
40.0 x 757.4 cm
F1995.11

Matsumura Goshun, master of the comically rendered figure, portrays the revered Thirty-Six Immortal Poets engaged in a panorama of assorted pleasures. The Japanese poets, representing a canonical group determined in the early eleventh century, are shown in an extended horizontal scene suggestive of an actors' troupe relaxing between engagements.[1] The thirty-six poets (including five women) are depicted as solitary, paired, or in larger groups. Their activities include conversation (sometimes animated by drink), board games, tug-of-war games (ranging in type from twine looped over the ears of contestants to the riskier standoff in which the twine is attached to the genitals of the male contestants), reading, archery, and origami. An aged Ōnakatomi no Yorimoto (died 956–58), wearing spectacles, is observed at mid-painting applying moxa to his leg, and, at the painting's conclusion, the beautiful Nakatsukasa (act. second half of the tenth century) gazes, with the aid of a telescope, at buildings on a distant hillside. Infirmity, boredom, irascibility, humor, playful competition, and hints of stylish modernity are effectively presented throughout the painting.

This painting, rendered on joined sheets of irregularly sized paper, is an underdrawing *(shita-e)* or preliminary drawing executed primarily in ink and filled with instructions for studio assistants or aide-mémoire for the artist. Images of the cavorting figures seen throughout are given only cursory or indicative coloring. Artist's notations pepper the scroll, providing information on the proper colors to be applied, correct distancing of vignettes, and placement of figures. An underdrawing, by virtue of its unfinished or "practice" function, frequently provides the occasion for more uninhibited and fluid expressions of an artist's brush. This work is no exception, as the characteristic strength of Goshun's line modulation is evident in both calligraphy and drawing. Goshun's paintings are generally noted for their bold, defining ink monochrome line and light polychrome washes. In that sense, with the exception of the calligraphed instructions, this draft work differs little in overall presentation from a finished Goshun painting. In addition, the clear articulation of the planning process recorded in numerous notations provides an invaluable art historical document. The "Goshun" signature is affixed after the final scene in the scroll.

In a unit of text written in the artist's hand at the beginning of the scroll, Goshun acknowledges as his source a scroll featuring images of the thirty-six poets at leisure *(kyūsoku kasen)* created by the poet-painter Hinaya Ryūho (1599–1669).[2] In noting his dependence on Ryūho, Goshun modestly protests that his own talent in creating comic forms is very limited. A unique feature of the Ryūho scroll is its poetry; instead of borrowing and inserting poems from already existing ancient anthologies, Ryūho created poems to be fictionally attributed to each poet and placed them adjacent to respective images. Within each poem is a coded reference to the poet's name. Indeed, the poems created by Ryūho are copied verbatim in the Goshun scroll.[3]

There is no known complete or finished version of the *Thirty-Six Immortal Poets at Leisure* painting by Goshun, but

there are several extant preliminary works similar to this painting, all bearing the "Goshun" signature. The artist began to use the sobriquet "Goshun" in 1781, abandoning the previously employed "Gekkei." Thus, the production of the various poet paintings can be located within the final three decades of the artist's life. The most widely published version of the scroll is in the collection of the Itsuō Museum, Ikeda, Japan. This scroll differs slightly from the Freer scroll, most notably in the placement of the initial five or six poet figures. Documentation in the Itsuō Museum archives refers to a similar scroll in the collection of Baron Kawasaki Yoshitarō (1869–1920) (whereabouts unknown) as somewhat more brightly colored. The multiple unfinished versions attest, at the very least, to the considerable popularity of this scroll.[4] A slightly later version by Nakagawa Gyokushū (1822–1870), dated to 1836, is in the collection of the Sumiya Hozonkai, Kyoto, Japan.[5] Gyokushū was a pupil of Isono Kadō (fl. second quarter of the nineteenth century), who, in turn, was a pupil of Matsumura Keibun (1799–1843), Goshun's younger half-brother and an important Kyoto painter. The existence of the Gyokushū scroll suggests that Goshun's lineage retained an affection for the subject and regarded it as an important work by the master. The correct positioning of the previously unpublished Freer scroll within the chronology of the small group of similar works is the subject of further research. The calligraphy throughout the scroll, including the artist's signature, is highly credible.

In his portrayal of the poets, Goshun indulged in the Edo period (1615–1868) fashion for playful or satirically imagined depictions of the worthies of the pantheon. Affectionate familiarity with and caricature of religious deities and revered cultural figures was a consistent subcurrent in Japanese art from the late Heian period (794–1185). However, from the late sixteenth century, the subjects of classical literature rendered in text or visual art, once the purview of the aristocracy, were embraced by wider segments of the population. Classical subjects became thematic grist for both traditional and emergent painting ateliers. In particular, ukiyo-e, the art generated by the intersecting worlds of the theater and brothel and employing both print and painting formats, frequently parodied classical themes. Also, from the seventeenth century, Chinese influences, manifest in the newly developing Japanese literati school of painting, offered established traditions of caricatured portrayal of continental sages. Certainly, by the eighteenth century, Japanese audiences had developed a sophisticated taste for visual and verbal parody of the ancients. The existence of more than one underdrawing for the Goshun painting suggests a commercial demand for the subject.

Goshun, a Kyoto native, emerged from the literati tradition, having studied both painting and poetry under the renowned Yosa Buson (1716–1783). Buson was a master of the *haiga*, a form combining the haiku poem with a painted image (*ga*). It was under Buson that Goshun learned the art of exaggerated and comical figural representation. Family misfortune caused Goshun to seek residence in Ikeda to the west of Osaka in 1781. Not until 1789, several years after Buson's death, did Goshun return to Kyoto, where he became associated with Maruyama Ōkyo (1733–1795), the great master of lyric realism. Ōkyo welcomed Goshun into his studio as a peer rather than as a student. Subsequently Goshun founded his own stylistic school, called Shijō after the street location of his studio. The style of Goshun's later years united indigenous and

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continental sensibilities, blending Ōkyo's vision and the literati forms learned under Buson's tutelage.[6]

The theme of the Thirty-Six Immortal Poets (Sanjūrokkasen) or, Thirty-Six Poetic Geniuses, has intrigued both poets and artists throughout Japan's history. In a no longer extant anthology, the *Sanjūrokunin sen* (Selection of thirty-six poets), compiled in the early eleventh century by the courtier-poet Fujiwara no Kintō (966–1041), the verse of thirty-six poets active from the mid-eighth century through the end of the tenth century is represented. Kintō's anthology offers usually fewer than a half-dozen poems by each of the poets. Only a century later, the anthology *Sanjūrokunin kashū* (Anthologies of the thirty-six poets) expanded Kintō's work to include all extant works by each poet. Numerous variations on the theme including poems exclusively by women and imagined contests engaging participants from disparate historical periods began to be produced about this time.[7]

Idealized portraits of the poets, usually juxtaposed with representative verse, most often on horizontal scrolls, can be documented from the thirteenth century. Three exceptional examples of this early type are found in the Freer Gallery of Art's mid-thirteenth-century portraits of the poets Ōnakatomi no Yorimoto (F50.23), Saigu no Nyogo (F50.24), and Minamoto no Kintada (F50.25). From the fourteenth century on, comic versions of the poetry contests became popular. For example the *Kenpō shokunin utaawase* (F06.4) employs the conceit of a court poetry contest imagined as an exchange between tradesmen and scruffy street types. The comic tradition soon embraced anthropomorphized animal participants.

Thirty-Six Immortal Poets at Leisure, the first example of Goshun's work to enter the Freer collection, is a significant addition to an important and chronologically varied group of works featuring Japanese poets. The Freer's well-known *Thirty-Six Poets* (F70.22), a two-fold screen by Sakai Hōitsu (1716–1828), Goshun's contemporary, provides an informative comparison with yet another mid-Edo period artist engaged in the same comedic vein. In addition, the Goshun painting can now unite teacher and pupil by complementing the Freer's masterpiece screen painting by Yosa Buson (F61.4 and F61.5).

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3. Ibid.

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6. Suntory Museum of Art, *Itsuō Bijutsu Kan Meihin ten: Buson to Goshun* (Masterpieces of the Itsuō Museum of Art: Buson and Goshun) (Tokyo: Suntory Museum of Art, 1981), pp. 72–95.

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Persimmons

Nakamura Hōchū (active late 18th–early 19th century)
Japan, Edo period, ca. 1800–10
Single standing screen (*tsuitate*), ink and color on paper
126.4 x 118.3 cm
F1996.28

If judged by the extant paintings attributed to him, Nakamura Hōchū was prolific. His work represents the revival of the Rimpa style in the Kyoto area. His paintings are characteristically casual and playful renderings often contrasted with the polished decorative realism seen in the efforts of Edo-based artists Sakai Hōitsu (1761–1828) and Suzuki Kiitsu (1796–1858), who also painted in the Rimpa style.[1]

Biographical documentation on Hōchū is scarce. His name appears in various records from 1790 to 1813. He was probably born and raised in Kyoto and had extensive professional associations in Osaka. No known Hōchū work bears an inscribed date; thus, constructing a chronology of his stylistic development depends on relating extant works to the few dated exhibition records that note his participation and describe his paintings. The persimmon painting seen here is signed "Tatsutatsu Hōchū sha kore" and impressed with a circle relief seal reading "Hō."[2] This combination together with stylistic evidence probably places the painting in the first decade of the nineteenth century.

Hōchū was an intimate of the renowned Osaka patron, connoisseur, and occasional painter Kimura Kenkadō (1736–1802). Especially prominent in Kenkadō's circle were artists of the literati school. A Hōchū landscape painting in the literati style entered in an exhibition in 1796 survives as a rare and important testimony of the artist's mastery and suggests his initial interests in sinophilic ambience of the Japanese literati world.[3]

Hōchū seems to have shifted from literati forms of expression to the Rimpa painting style in the late 1790s. In 1802 Hōchū's renderings of paintings by Ogata Kōrin (1658–1716) were published in woodblock printed volumes under the title *Kōrin gafu* (A Kōrin album). This important interpretive cataloguing of the master's works predated by more than a decade the extensive efforts of Sakai Hōitsu to revive interest in Kōrin and the Rimpa tradition. Hōitsu's woodblock renderings of Ogata Kōrin's and Ogata Kenzan's (1663–1743) paintings, the *Kōrin hyakuzu* (An assortment of images by Kōrin), were published in 1815, anticipating the centennial of Kōrin's death.[4]

The word *Rimpa* is formed by combining the second syllable of Ogata Kōrin's name and the word *ha,* meaning "group" or "school." The Rimpa painting style is characterized by the "boneless" rendering of forms by washes of color or ink, without the aid of defining ink borders or outlines. *Tarashikomi,* perhaps the best-known Rimpa technique, creates the suggestion of modeling and dimension by pooling wet ink on semidried ink in overlapping, partly random forms. Rimpa's thematic repertory was derived from ancient court literature, often employing subjects of nature to allude to the instructive qualities of the seasons. Revivalists such as Sakai Hōitsu probably recognized that a lineage beginning with Kōrin was somewhat artificial, but only in the Meiji era (1868–1912) was Kōrin's dependence on Tawaraya Sōtatsu (?–1643?) fully explicated.[5] Contemporary scholarship regards Sōtatsu as the originator of the characteristic Rimpa style.

Hōitsu's interest in Kōrin stemmed from the wealthy Sakai family's extensive collection of Kōrin's paintings. The reasons for Hōchū's interests in Kōrin are less clear. Nevertheless, the fact that within a decade two talented painters with records of accomplishment in other painting styles would energetically document and emulate Kōrin's style is remarkable and speaks to the power of what would anachronistically be called the Rimpa vision.

The fruit-ladden persimmon branch is an unusual, if not unique, subject for Hōchū. The skilled rendering of mottled branch and decaying leaves offers a melancholy vision of transience and autumnal demise quite different from Hōchū's many more buoyant and lighthearted works. The persimmon painting was originally presented as a single standing screen (*tsuitate*), a format rare among Hōchū's extant works, which are dominated by the fan painting format.

When contrasted with the work of his Edo contemporaries, Hōitsu and Kiitsu, Hōchū's approach to the Rimpa style is marked by gentle humor, understated allusion, and ambiguity expressed through fluid rather than sharply rendered forms. The persimmon screen painting, the first work by Hōchū to enter the collection of the Freer Gallery of Art, is a powerful and instructive addition to a collection famous for its works of nearly all the major Rimpa practitioners.

James T. Ulak

NOTES

1. Howard A. Link and Shimbo Tōru, *Exquisite Visions: Rimpa Paintings from Japan* (Honolulu: Honolulu Academy of Arts in association with Japan House Gallery, New York, 1980), pp. 35–48.

2. The author suggests that "Hō" (phoenix) is a probable reading, but some scholars prefer to classify the seal as indecipherable.

3. Gitter collection, New Orleans. See Kimura Shigekazu, *Nakamura Hōchū gashu* (The paintings of Nakamura Hōchū) (Kyoto: Fuji Art Publishing, 1991), plate 23.

4. Ibid., unpaginated introduction.

5. Link and Shimbo, *Exquisite Visions,* pp. 15–18.

Plum, Narcissus, and Bamboo with Magpie

Yamamoto Baiitsu (1783–1856)
Japan, Edo period, ca. 1832–52
Hanging scroll, ink and color on silk
133.1 x 56.1 cm
F1998.78

Yamamoto Baiitsu's career stands a century distant from the first generation of Japanese literati painters—Gion Nankai (1697–1751), Yanagisawa Kien (1704–1758), and Sakaki Hyakusen (1697–1758)—who began their initial project of assimilating Chinese Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) painting styles during the first half of the eighteenth century. Baiitsu's talent, as amply evident in the painting seen here, was as a colorist and brilliant master of the brush fully imbued in but unrestrained by conventional literati painting practice. It is generally agreed that the refined bird-and-flower paintings of the late Ming artist Zhou Zhimian (Chou Chih-mien, active ca. 1580–1610) were the ultimate precedent for Baiitsu's works.[1]

This painting, which contains an unusual mélange of traditional Chinese symbolic elements, is also confidently eclectic in its use of techniques, Chinese as well as Japanese innovations developed by artists of the Rimpa and Shijō schools active during the Edo period (1615–1868).

Plum, bamboo, and narcissus, when grouped together, are referred to as the Three Purities.[2] The addition of the magpie, a symbol of happiness, and the rock, indicative of perennial youth or long life, together with the three plants suggests a general invocation of things auspicious. It is possible that the combination may have been read as a rebus with quite particular meanings for Baiitsu and his audience.

As can be observed in the best examples of Baiitsu's work, natural life is rendered as if on a dividing line between the realistic and lyrical. Baiitsu made effective use of silk types in combination with ink layering to create a visual sense of vibrating and slightly unstable forms. Ink placed on the heavily sized and closely woven silk used in this painting achieves precisely that ethereal quality.

The arrangement of natural elements is gracefully contrived to suit the artist's compositional intentions. Representations move from upper left to lower right in patterns of decreasing density. The movement is from a complex overlayering of blossoming plum branches and bamboo to more liberally spaced bamboo stalks, one bending under the weight of a preening magpie, and finally to the cluster of narcissus with stems languidly stretched by full yellow blossoms. A parallel movement in palette shifts from a dominance of ink monochrome in the upper right to the full color rendering of the narcissus.

Baiitsu's reputation for bravura presentations of ink on silk is confirmed in this painting. At virtually every point the viewer is gently reminded that the underlying support for this image is a tightly woven warp and woof of heavily sized silk. The visibility of materials enhances the image. Dry brush texture strokes, seen for example on the rock formation, leave traces of black pigment barely clinging to the higher ridges of the silk weave. Density is rendered by overlays of varied ink tones. Alternately, Baiitsu's mastery of *tarashikomi*, the application of the charged brush to wet or partially dried ink, is employed in several ways. The most familiar use of this technique is seen, for example, in the suggestion of texture or dappling on a *Prunus* branch. More striking is the artist's use of delicately traced outlines on certain plant elements. As seen in the rendering of a bamboo leaf, the shape of the leaf is brushed in wash on silk, and then a dark, thin outline is traced around the shape, slightly bleeding the lighter wash with darker outline to give the impression that the total leaf form was applied with one brush. Thus, Baiitsu's comparatively orthodox thematic repertory is given haunting vitality through the skillful use of innovative technique. The resultant paintings provide a shimmering vision of the natural world that consistently suggests an unseen force beneath the presented surface.

Born in Nagoya, the son of a sculptor, Baiitsu studied painting with various masters, and stories from his youth suggest that he was a prodigy. There is evidence that he was a student of Chō Gesshō (1770–1832), a poet and painter in the Shijō style who trained under Matsumura Goshun (1752–1811). Yamamoto Rantei (dates unknown), a painter in the Kano and later in ukiyo-e styles, is thought also to have been an early teacher. Baiitsu's talent, together with that of his fellow townsman Nakabayashi Chikutō (1776–1853), was recognized and fostered by Kamiya Tenyū (1710–1801), a connoisseur of Chinese painting. Tenyū's advice, made plausible by the use of his own Chinese painting collection and access to others, was that Baiitsu seek out true models of Chinese painting rather than apprentice to the instruction of a single Japanese master. Baiitsu's name (literally "Plum Leisure") was purportedly given to him by Tenyū when the master observed the young artist's intense attraction to the painting of a *Prunus* by Wang Mien (1287–1359). Tenyū also named Chikutō (literally "Bamboo Grotto") based on his interest in the bamboo paintings of Li K'an (1245–1320).[3]

Baiitsu left Nagoya in 1801 and from then until 1832 traveled extensively, often basing in Kyoto. In 1832, after considering permanent residence in Nagoya, Baiitsu moved to Kyoto and during the next two decades was, by contemporaneous accounts, an exceedingly popular and envied painter. Intense rivalry and jealousy caused him to return to Nagoya in 1854 for the final years of his life. The seal impressed on this painting, an intaglio square reading "Yamamoto ryō," is observed on paintings executed in the period from the early 1830s through the early 1850s. The relative chronological position of the Baiitsu signature is a matter for further research.[4]

This painting joins a pair of screens in the Freer Gallery of Art that are widely regarded as Baiitsu's finest creations in that large format (F61.1–.2). The screens, a production of Baiitsu's later years, show juxtaposed scenes of scholars relaxing in a mountain pine grove and fishermen at work in a marshy inlet. Rendered on paper, these

GIFT OF KLAUS F.
NAUMANN
IN HONOR OF THE
FTH ANNIVERSARY
GALLERY OF ART

paintings are a complex catalogue of the artist's brush techniques and offer an instructive comparison with the techinques employed on the silk surface of the bird-and-flower painting. In combination, these works provide an excellent survey of Baiitsu's talent.

While in Kyoto, Baiitsu was joined by his boyhood friend Nakabayashi Chikutō and later by another Nagoya artist, Izuhara Makoku (1777–1860). Baiitsu and Chikutō gave Makoku the studio name of Shōkoku, meaning "Pine Valley," thus completing the circle of the traditional Three Friends—pine, *Prunus*, and bamboo.[5] The three friends are reassembled in the Freer collection through the presence of a major landscape painting in screen format by Chikutō (F68.69–70) and a rare pair of hanging scrolls by Makoku (F1997.31.1–2).

James T. Ulak

NOTES

1. James Cahill, *Scholar Painters of Japan: The Nanga School* (New York: Asia Society, 1972), p. 120.

2. See *Sencha zensho* (Tokyo: Shufunotomo, 1973), pp. 66–68, as noted in Patricia Jane Graham, "Yamamoto Baiitsu: His Life, Literati Pursuits, and Related Paintings" (Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 1983), p. 155.

3. Graham, "Yamamoto Baiitsu," p. 30.

4. Ibid. Graham's dissertation is an excellent treatment of the artist's biography and offers in great detail information found in the less accessible study by Kanematsu Romon, *Baiitsu to Chikutō* (Tokyo, 1910). See especially pp. 21–79.

5. Ibid., p. 69.

Fujiwara no Yasumasa Plays the Flute by Moonlight

Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839–1892)
Japan, Meiji era, dated February 12, 1883
Woodblock print triptych, ink and color on paper
Overall 35.5 x 70 cm
S1997.30a–c

This woodblock print triptych is the most successful of Yoshitoshi's several variations of Yasumasa's legendary encounter with the brigand Hakamadare Yasusuke. The image is regarded as Yoshitoshi's best known and most successful. Yoshitoshi was arguably the most important and influential print designer of the Meiji era (1868–1912). His works mirrored the pervasive sense of violence and uncertainty experienced by the Japanese during a time of dramatic social upheaval.

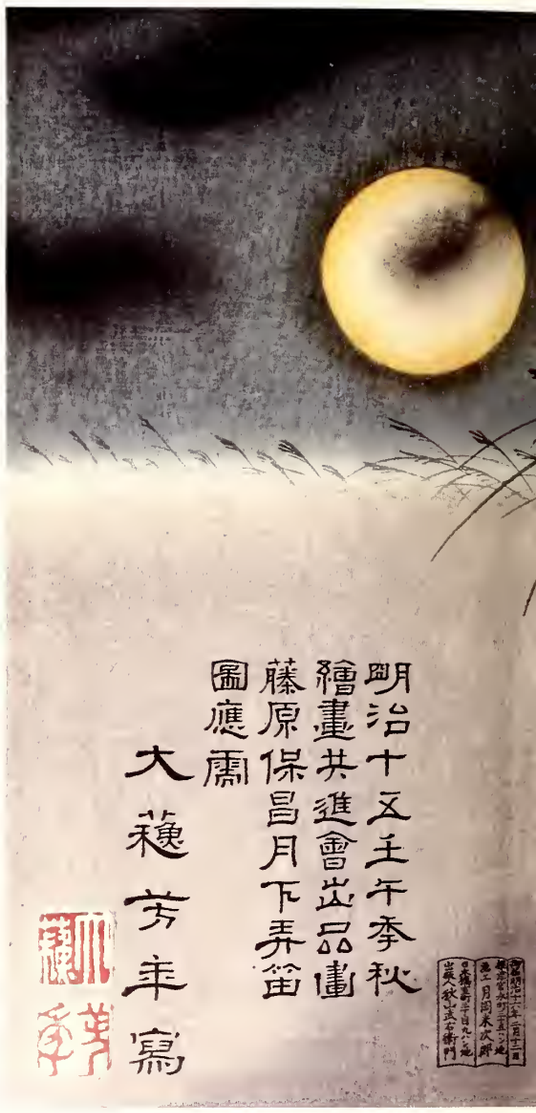
The legend of the Heian courtier Fujiwara no Yasumasa (958–1036) is recorded in the twelfth-century anthology *Konjaku monogatari* (Tales of times now past). Yasumasa, a renowned poet and flutist, strolled the Ichiharano Moor on a chill autumn night. The brigand Hakamadare Yasusuke, in search of winter clothing, was waiting in ambush. The image captures the moment when Yasusuke, prepared to strike, was seduced by the sound of Yasumasa's flute. Then the preternaturally calm courtier returned to his residence with the would-be thief following in a trance. At the residence Yasusuke was presented with a robe to ward off the coming cold. The story alludes to the ongoing contention between the court and the military for the soul of the nation: the victory of refinement and culture over force and violence, of the scholar-courtier over the warrior. Yoshitoshi's interpretation adds the atmosphere of dark drama and the supernatural.[1]

The success of Yoshitoshi's design, and certainly its appeal to the modern eye, owes much to a brilliantly tense, cinematic distillation of essential dramatic elements.

Nineteenth-century Japanese woodblock printmakers frequently used the triptych format to portray popular scenes from Kabuki drama. In most of these prints, the clear ambience of the stage set flavored the resulting image. Also, owing to an apparent fashion of the times, dense compositions, often approaching horror vacui, were favored. Yoshitoshi rejected both tendencies. He provides a haunting, natural, and uncluttered atmosphere for his players, thus emphasizing the unabashedly theatrical and obviously symbolic poses of the courtier and brigand. But he sustains his naturalism by rendering the figures in Western drawing techniques. The effect was, by virtue of these innovative combinations, to offer the sense of unfamiliar forms emerging from a vaguely traditional context.

The story of Yasumasa was adapted for the Kabuki stage in 1822 and then revived in 1862. In 1882 Yoshitoshi entered a painting featuring the later successful print composition in the first goverment-sponsored exhibition of modern Japanese painting. Although the painting was passed over for honors, it was duly noted by the publisher Akiyama Buemon, who published the image in the print format seen here. The Kabuki version of the Yasumasa episode experienced yet a third revival in the spring of 1883, when the staging was based directly on Yoshitoshi's print. Later in the summer of the same year the image was re-created in a massive three-dimensional float form and paraded in the Sannō Festival of the Hie Shrine. Yoshitoshi made a personal appearance seated on the float.[2]

During the second half of the nineteenth century the traditional single-sheet woodblock print was gradually usurped by mass circulation newspapers as the vehicle for the printed image. Yoshitoshi's career coincided with this period of transition, and he proved himself at ease with the demands of both formats. His images reflect the immediacy, sensationalism, and energy that sought to capture the attention and interests of the new mass audience. Nevertheless, his works retained the technical brilliance and nuanced composition of the older tradition. Obvious in the Yasumasa triptych, and recurrent in the artist's designs dating from



the 1860s on, was the influence of Western techniques of shading, foreshortening, and perspective.[3] His subtle introduction of Western techniques notwithstanding, Yoshitoshi eschewed the affectation of some Japanese Meiji era artists to sign romanized versions of their names. His printed signature "Ōju Taiso Yoshitoshi sha" is followed by the printed square intaglio seal reading "Taiso" and the printed relief seal reading "Yoshitoshi."

The acquisition of *Fujiwara no Yasumasa Plays the Flute by Moonlight* provides the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery with a fine impression of a print that powerfully represents Japanese culture standing at the brink of the modern world. Rendering an ancient tale in a mesmerizing blend of

PURCHASE
MASTER,
WILLARD
AND

Western and Japanese visual elements, Yoshitoshi contrasts the gracious and generously hypnotic power of beauty with the brute techniques of crude and grasping survival. He foretells, in a single image, the fundamental spiritual conflict at the advent of what would prove to be Japan's most violent and prosperous century. The print serves as a keystone for an important body of Meiji era and Taishō era (1912–26) graphic art being assembled for the Sackler Gallery.

James T. Ulak

PUBLISHED

Roger Keyes and George Kuwayama, *The Bizarre Imagery of Yoshitoshi: The Herbert R. Cole Collection* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1980), pp. 56–57; Segi Shinichi, *Yoshitoshi, The Splendid Decadent*, trans. Alfred Birnbaum (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1985), pp. 126–27 and front foldout.

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2. Ibid. See also Roger Keyes and George Kuwayama, *The Bizarre Imagery of Yoshitoshi: The Herbert R. Cole Collection* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1980), pp. 56–57. See also Segi Shinichi's general essay (pp. 17–124) and essays by Kuwayama (pp. 8–15) and Keyes (pp. 16–21) for excellent biographical and stylistic information.

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James T. Ulak

PURCHASE
DR. CARDL MASTER, MR. AND MRS. WILLARD CLARK, AND DR. AND MRS. RDBERT S. FEINBERG
ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY 10TH ANNIVERSARY

PUBLISHED

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Prints of Yokohama and of Meiji Japan

Japan, Edo period (1615–1868) and Meiji era (1868–1912), late 19th century
Woodblock prints; ink and color on paper
s1998.25–111

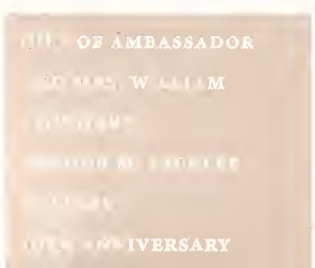
The opening of the international treaty port at Yokohama in July 1859 marked the beginning of a new era for Japan. After a long period of extremely restricted foreign contact limited mainly to the Dutch and Chinese at Nagasaki, merchants from the United States, Britain, France, Russia, and the Netherlands were permitted to live in the newly built town of Yokohama, located only twenty-seven kilometers from the nearby metropolis of Edo (modern Tokyo) and the shogun's castle. For the first time in Japanese history, the modern industrializing nations of Europe and the United States began to eclipse China as the principal sources for technological, political, and cultural ideas and institutions.

The efficient and prolific commercial publishers of woodblock prints in Edo quickly recognized the potential national and international market for prints of Yokohama, its new foreign residents, and the fascinating inventions they brought aboard their large steamships. Prints of Yokohama proved to be extremely popular. More than five hundred designs by thirty-one artists were issued by some fifty publishers by the end of 1862.[1] Even after the decline in production of Yokohama prints after 1862, depictions of life in foreign nations and the modernization and technological advancement of Japan continued to provide new subjects for Japanese prints during the Meiji era.[2]

Yokohama prints form a distinct category of Japanese prints produced during the last years of the Edo period (1615–1868), which ended following the resignation of the last shogun in late 1867. Subjects include panoramic views of the newly built town, which had formerly been the site of a small fishing village. Publishers commissioned artists to produce scenic, maplike prints in large formats, often comprising six or more of the standard single-sheet *oban* size. Also of great interest to publishers and artists were the large Western ships powered by a combination of steam and sail. By far the most popular subjects of Yokohama prints, however, were the foreigners themselves. Vast numbers of prints were designed to feature individuals, couples, and groups of foreigners dressed in what the artists and publishers thought to be representative costumes of their native countries. Labels identifying the nationality were sometimes accompanied by explanatory texts or glossaries of Japanese words and their English, French, Dutch, or Russian equivalents.

Imagination and interpretation from secondary sources such as illustrated newspapers and magazines provided the models for most of the prints; because of restrictions by the Japanese government on travel to and from Yokohama, only a few artists, notably Sadahide (1807–ca. 1878), seem to have made firsthand observations there. Yokohama prints often portray the foreigners in modes already familiar to Japanese audiences. Portrayals of women known as *bijinga* (pictures of beauties), for example, frequently are subjects, despite the scarcity of foreign women resident in Yokohama during the early 1860s, when living in Japan was still regarded as difficult and hazardous in comparison with the better-established treaty ports of China. Foreign children, whose depictions were based on illustrations, were also shown in Japanese prints of the period. Stereotypical imagery that associated, for example, wine-drinking with the French and cigar-smoking with the Americans, was also common in these prints, which were intended for a broad urban audience with varied degrees of literacy.

Both the Yokohama prints and later prints showing the changing technology and customs of Meiji-era Japan reflect a broad popular interest in the visible aspects of the social, economic, and politcal change that Japan experienced from the 1850s onward. Prints were the most accessible and easily disseminated illustrations of what must at first have seemed to be extraordinary people from distant, alien cultures. Yokohama prints of foreigners dining, drinking from stemmed glasses, and sitting in chairs are in effect mirror images of the writings of American and European travelers to Japan who recounted Japanese cus-



Western Traders at Yokohama Transporting Merchandise, Sadahide (1807–ca. 1878), Japan, Edo period, 1861, woodblock print pentaptych, ink and color on paper, 37.2 x 127.0 cm. s1998.55a–e

toms such as sitting and sleeping on floor mats or eating with chopsticks. Yokohama prints reveal a widespread Japanese interest in what were still remote cultures, known to the artists mainly through pictures rather than from direct knowledge, while Meiji prints portray with considerable accuracy the gradual assimilation of Western architecture, clothing styles, and institutional models.

The collection of Yokohama and Meiji prints formed by Ambassador and Mrs. William Leonhart reflects an interest in the subject of Japanese relations with the United States and Europe that began during Ambassador Leonhart's first diplomatic service in Japan (1951–55). For nearly forty years, the Leonharts continued to collect Japanese prints, focusing on the themes of Yokohama prints and the modernization of Japan.

Their gift to the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery this year comprises 181 prints forming 79 images or series. With the fourteen prints (three triptychs and three single prints) from their collection given in previous years, this gift places in the Sackler Gallery all of the prints shown in the exhibition, *Yokohama: Prints from Nineteenth-Century Japan*, which opened at the Sackler Gallery in 1990 and traveled to the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The Leonharts provided, through the Daval Foundation, important support for the research and preparation of the exhibition and its catalogue. This gift of selected noted works from the Leonharts' distinguished collection of Yokohama and Meiji prints provides the Sackler Gallery with a highly important group of nineteenth-century Japanese prints and greatly strengthens the museum's holdings of Japanese prints, which are currently a focus of collecting, research, and exhibition.

Ann Yonemura

PUBLISHED

Ann Yonemura, *Yokohama: Prints from Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990).

NOTES

1. Ann Yonemura, *Yokohama: Prints from Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), p. 31 and p. 35, note 1. See also Kanagawa Kenritsu Hakubutsukan (Kanagawa Prefectural Museum), *Shūtaisei Yokohama ukiyo-e* (Compilation of Yokohama prints) (Yokohama: Yūrindō, 1979), pp. 520–23.

2. See Julia Meech, *The World of the Meiji Print: Impressions of a New Civilization* (New York: Weatherhill, 1986).

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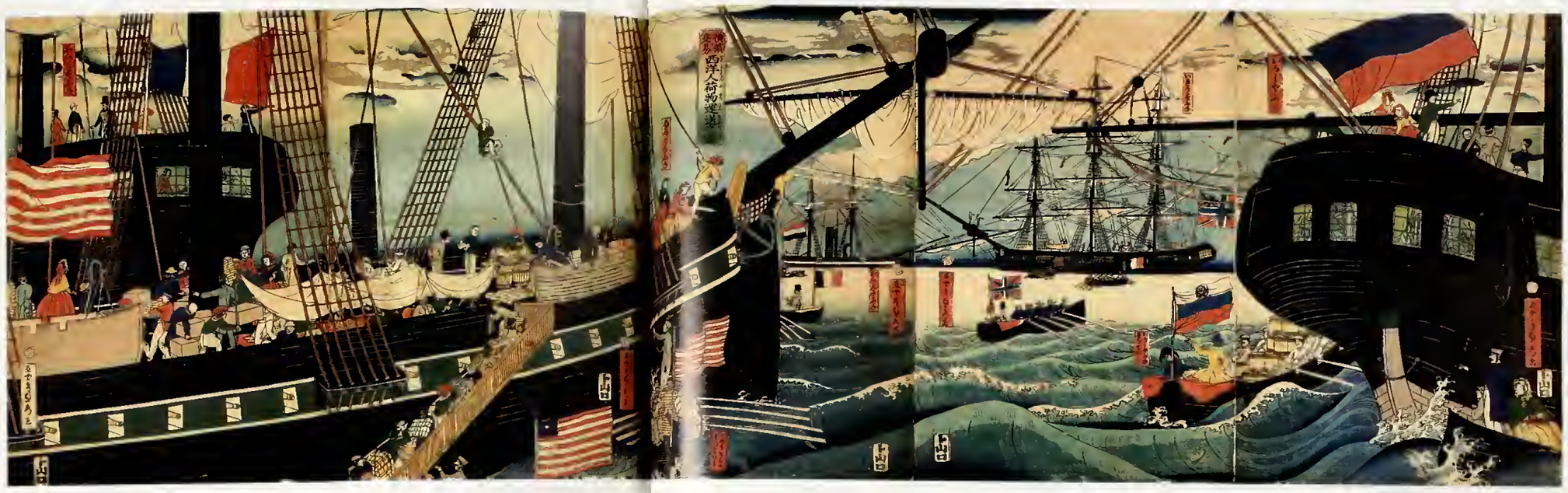
s1998.25–111



The opening of the international treaty port at Yokohama in July 1859 marked the beginning of a new era for Japan. After a long period of extremely restricted foreign contact limited mainly to the Dutch and Chinese at Nagasaki, merchants from the United States, Britain, France, Russia, and the Netherlands were permitted to live in the newly built town of Yokohama, located only twenty-seven kilometers from the nearby metropolis of Edo (modern Tokyo) and the shogun's castle. For the first time in Japanese history, the modern industrializing nations of Europe and the United States began to eclipse China as the principal sources for technological, political, and cultural ideas and institutions.

The efficient and prolific commercial publishers of woodblock prints in Edo quickly recognized the potential national and international market for prints of Yokohama, its new foreign residents, and the fascinating inventions they brought aboard their large steamships. Prints of Yokohama proved to be extremely popular. More than five hundred designs by thirty-one artists were issued by some fifty publishers by the end of 1862.[1] Even after the decline in production of Yokohama prints after 1862, depictions of life in foreign nations and the modernization and technological advancement of Japan continued to provide new subjects for Japanese prints during the Meiji era.[2]

Yokohama prints form a distinct category of Japanese prints produced during the last years of the Edo period (1615–1868), which ended following the resignation of the last shogun in late 1867. Subjects include panoramic views of the newly built town, which had formerly been the site of a small fishing village. Publishers commissioned artists to produce scenic, maplike prints in large formats, often comprising six or more of the standard single-sheet *oban* size. Also of great interest to publishers and artists were the large Western ships powered by a combination of steam and sail. By far the most popular subjects of Yokohama prints, however, were the foreigners themselves. Vast numbers of prints were designed to feature individuals, couples, and groups of foreigners dressed in what the artists and publishers thought to be representative costumes of their native countries. Labels identifying the nationality were sometimes accompanied by explanatory texts or glossaries of Japanese words and their English, French, Dutch, or Russian equivalents.

Imagination and interpretation from secondary sources such as illustrated newspapers and magazines provided the models for most of the prints; because of restrictions by the Japanese government on travel to and from Yokohama, only a few artists, notably Sadahide (1807–ca. 1878), seem to have made firsthand observations there. Yokohama prints often portray the foreigners in modes already familiar to Japanese audiences. Portrayals of women known as *bijinga* (pictures of beauties), for example, frequently are subjects, despite the scarcity of foreign women resident in Yokohama during the early 1860s, when living in Japan was still regarded as difficult and hazardous in comparison with the better-established treaty ports of China. Foreign children, whose depictions were based on illustrations, were also shown in Japanese prints of the period. Stereotypical imagery that associated, for example, wine-drinking with the French and cigar-smoking with the Americans, was also common in these prints, which were intended for a broad urban audience with varied degrees of literacy.

Both the Yokohama prints and later prints showing the changing technology and customs of Meiji-era Japan reflect a broad popular interest in the visible aspects of the social, economic, and politcal change that Japan experienced from the 1850s onward. Prints were the most accessible and easily disseminated illustrations of what must at first have seemed to be extraordinary people from distant, alien cultures. Yokohama prints of foreigners dining, drinking from stemmed glasses, and sitting in chairs are in effect mirror images of the writings of American and European travelers to Japan who recounted Japanese customs such as sitting and sleeping on floor mats or eating with chopsticks. Yokohama prints reveal a widespread Japanese interest in what were still remote cultures, known to the artists mainly through pictures rather than from direct knowledge, while Meiji prints portray with considerable accuracy the gradual assimilation of Western architecture, clothing styles, and institutional models.

The collection of Yokohama and Meiji prints formed by Ambassador and Mrs. William Leonhart reflects an interest in the subject of Japanese relations with the United States and Europe that began during Ambassador Leonhart's first diplomatic service in Japan (1951–55). For nearly forty years, the Leonharts continued to collect Japanese prints, focusing on the themes of Yokohama prints and the modernization of Japan.

Their gift to the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery this year comprises 181 prints forming 79 images or series. With the fourteen prints (three triptychs and three single prints) from their collection given in previous years, this gift places in the Sackler Gallery all of the prints shown in the exhibition, *Yokohama: Prints from Nineteenth-Century Japan*, which opened at the Sackler Gallery in 1990 and traveled to the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The Leonharts provided, through the Daval Foundation, important support for the research and preparation of the exhibition and its catalogue. This gift of selected noted works from the Leonharts' distinguished collection of Yokohama and Meiji prints provides the Sackler Gallery with a highly important group of nineteenth-century Japanese prints and greatly strengthens the museum's holdings of Japanese prints, which are currently a focus of collecting, research, and exhibition.

Ann Yonemura

GIFT OF AMBASSADOR AND MRS. WILLIAM LEONHART
ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY
10TH ANNIVERSARY

Western Traders at Yokohama Transporting Merchandise, Sadahide (1807–ca. 1878), Japan, Edo period, 1861, woodblock print pentaptych, ink and color on paper, 37.2 x 127.0 cm.
s1998.55a–e

PUBLISHED

Ann Yonemura, *Yokohama: Prints from Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990).

NOTES

1. Ann Yonemura, *Yokohama: Prints from Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), p. 31 and p. 35, note 1. See also Kanagawa Kenritsu Hakubutsukan (Kanagawa Prefectural Museum), *Shintaisei Yokohama ukiyo-e* (Compilation of Yokohama prints) (Yokohama: Yūrindō, 1979), pp. 520–23.

2. See Julia Meech, *The World of the Meiji Print: Impressions of a New Civilization* (New York: Weatherhill, 1986).

Box with sagittaria design

Akatsuka Jitoku (1871–1936)
Japan, Taishō era (1912–26), before January 5, 1919
Lacquer, gold, silver, and mother-of-pearl on wood; silver rim mounts
Height 11.7, width 20.0, depth 26.4 cm
F1997.17ab

Decorated with gold and inlaid mother-of-pearl, this box is an outstanding example of lacquerware produced for the Japanese imperial household by the artist Akatsuka Jitoku, whose signature is inscribed inconspicuously on the interior of the lid.[1] The chrysanthemum crest used by the imperial family ornaments the center of the lid, and the inscription on a paper label on the outer storage box indicates that the lacquer box was presented, probably as a New Year gift, from Emperor Taishō (1879–1926; reigned 1912–26) to an unnamed recipient on January 5, 1919. In 1907 Japanese Imperial Prince Fushiminomiya Sadanaru (1858–1923) gave an unsigned box of similar design by Jitoku to Mary, Princess of Wales (1867–1953).[2]

The decoration of the box, which has the proportions and shape of a small document box with a flush-fitting lid, consists of flowering water plants (*Sagittaria*) beside a stream. The design is executed in flat and low-relief *maki-e*, a Japanese technique in which gold and silver in the form of fine powder, particles, and leaf are sprinkled and applied over the lacquered surface. Flower petals shaped in low relief from mother-of-pearl are inlaid into the lacquered surface using a technique called *raden*. Both methods of lacquer decoration were known in Japan by the mid-eighth century and are documented by objects preserved in the Shōsōin Imperial Repository, which houses the possessions of Emperor Shōmu (701–756). The extraordinary quality of the decoration of this box is revealed in such details as the subtly varied iridescent colors ranging from violet to blue-green that are reflected from the inlaid mother-of-pearl shell and the delicate tonalities of the gold decoration.

The pictorial design, which resembles a painting, expresses traditional Japanese preferences for nonsymmetrical decorative schemes based on landscapes, birds, and plants. This concept of a unified pictorial composition continuing without interruption over all the visible surfaces of a three-dimensional object developed in lacquer design as early as the Heian period (794–1185) and was given new vitality through the innovative ideas of Hon'ami Kōetsu (1558–1637) and Ogata Kōrin (1658–1716), two artists of the Rimpa school.[3] Their lacquer designs employed large-scale, simplified, and stylized motifs executed in *maki-e* with inlays of metalwork and mother-of-pearl. The legacy of the bold motifs and simplified composition of Rimpa lacquer designs is reflected in the decoration of this box, which combines superb technique with a subtle and sensitive approach to composition. Even the imperial chrysanthemum crest is integrated into the overall design in a position that suggests the sun or moon.

Selecting lacquerware as an imperial gift reveals the prestige and national pride historically associated with this refined and luxurious craft. Lacquer objects, especially those decorated with gold and silver in *maki-e* techniques, were among the most cherished possessions of Japan's upper classes, and they were usually inherited within families or bestowed as gifts on important occasions. Moreover, the imperial presentation of an object representing a traditional Japanese craft with a history centuries long underscored the campaign undertaken by the government and the imperial household that had begun in the 1880s, a period of rising nationalism, to foster and promote national artistic traditions. Traditional Japanese arts appropriately expressed the official aspiration to enhance national unity through the preservation and continuation of cultural history.[4] Sponsorship and patronage of the arts by the Japanese imperial household and the Japanese government thus favored conservative and traditional themes and styles. Japanese painting, called Nihonga, was displayed in government-sponsored exhibitions beginning in the 1880s, and the leading artists were selected to paint for the imperial palace. The prestigious title of Imperial Household Artist (Teishitsu gigeiin) was established in 1890 to recognize the leading Nihonga painters and specialists of traditional crafts.[5] Nihonga painters and crafts specialists, including lacquerers, were selected to represent Japan abroad in international expositions, where Japanese gold lacquer pieces won the utmost acclaim.

Akatsuka Jitoku was appointed Imperial Household Artist in 1930. Born into a family of lacquer artists whose lineage reached back several generations, Jitoku rose to prominence and worked for the imperial household during the Meiji era (1868–1912). A cabinet by Jitoku decorated with a motif of a peacock and peahen in gold and silver *maki-e* and inlays of blue-green shell was presented in 1911 to Queen Mary of England as a coronation gift from Emperor Meiji (1852–1912; reigned 1868–1912).[6] The superb quality of Jitoku's lacquer designs came from his mastery of technique under his father's guidance and his study of both Nihonga under Kano Hisanobu and Terazaki Kōgyō (1866–1919) and Western-style painting at the Hakubakai Institute.[7] In the design of this box, for example, the large scale of the *Sagittaria*, the stylized pattern of waves, and the combination of mother-of-pearl inlay and gold *maki-e* techniques are reminiscent of Japanese Rimpa school designs for painting and lacquerware, but the articulation of the foliage and flowers also reveals the artist's interest in the detailed and naturalistic delineation that his early training in academic Kano school painting techniques would have fostered. Overall, his design for this box has an understated quality that stresses subtlety, elegance, and fidelity to traditional aesthetic values, in keeping with the association of the box with imperial taste.

This signed work by Akatsuka Jitoku is not only the first imperially commissioned lacquer object in the Japanese collection of the Freer Gallery of Art; it is also the first work in the collection to represent this important artist, whose achievements have been recognized both in Japan and internationally.[8] As one of the leading lacquer masters of the early twentieth century, Jitoku

was a member of the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts (Teikoku bijutsu-in) and a judge of the Exhibition of the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts (Teiten). Together with other leading lacquer artists such as Shirayama Shōsai (1853–1923), Jitoku strove for lacquer to be recognized as a fine art, and in his later work he developed a distinctive individual style that incorporated aspects of his training in Western art. Acquisition of this piece, the first lacquer work in the collection datable to the Taishō era (1912–26), also extends the historical scope of the Freer Gallery's collection of Japanese lacquer, which now includes pieces dating from the fifteenth to the early twentieth centuries.[9]

Ann Yonemura

NOTES

1. This box was purchased from Christie's, New York, Japanese Works of Art Sale, no. 8732, September 17, 1997, lot 230.

2. Jan Dees, "Imperial Lacquer Boxes by Akatsuka Jitoku," *Andon* 30 (1988): 103.

3. The term *Rimpa*, which derives from the second syllable of Kōrin's name, was first used in the Meiji era (1868–1912). Earlier artists, such as Sōtatsu and Kōetsu, whose names had also been used to designate this distinctive stylistic current from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, were also included in the designation Rimpa. Originating in Kyoto around the beginning of seventeenth century, the deliberately simplified designs associated with Rimpa had a pervasive influence on art and fine crafts, including lacquerware and textiles. Many Rimpa artists created designs in more than one medium.

4. Satō Dōshin, "Imperial Household Artists (*Teishitsu gigeiin*)," in Ellen P. Conant, in collaboration with Steven D. Owyoung and J. Thomas Rimer, *Nihonga Transcending the Past: Japanese-Style Painting, 1868–1968* (St. Louis, Mo.: Saint Louis Art Museum, 1995), pp. 92–93.

5. Ohkuma Toshiyuki, "Reassessing Historical Role: The Imperial Household and the Imperial Household Ministry and Modern Japanese Art," in *Essays: Twelve Centuries of Japanese Art from the Imperial Collections*, ed. Ann Yonemura (Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 1997), pp. 75–76.

6. Jan Dees, "Japanese Imperial Presentation Boxes, 1900–1930," *Oriental Art* 43, no. 1(1997): 5, figs. 6a, 6b.

7. National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, *Kindai Nihon no shitsugei* (Tokyo: Tokyo Kokuritsu Kindai Bijutsukan, 1979), unpaginated appendix.

8. Jitoku won a gold medal in the Louisiana Purchase Exposition at St. Louis in 1904. See Dees, "Japanese Imperial Presentation Boxes," p. 5.

9. Ann Yonemura, *Japanese Lacquer* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1979), includes the most significant works acquired prior to 1979. Important acquisitions since publication of that catalogue include a Namban lacquer chest (F79.50) from the Momoyama period (1573–1615), a *suzuribako* (box for writing equipment) formerly in the collection of Charles A. Greenfield with a design from *The Tale of Genji* (F1991.9), a sixteenth-century *suzuribako* with a design of camellias and garden hoes (F1992.9), and a *suzuribako* with a design based on the imperial poetry anthology *Senzai wakashū* (F1991.54).

Self-Portrait

Kohno Michisei (1895–1950)
Japan, Taishō era, April 1917
Oil on canvas
91.2 x 65.3 cm
s1998.115

In the decade extending from approximately 1914 to 1924 a significant number of unusually fine portrait paintings were created by Japanese artists, both in the traditional Japanese style (Nihonga) and in the more recently mastered Western style (Yōga) of oil painting on canvas. The self-portrait seen here stands as one of the most important of that distinguished group.[1]

The young artist presents himself in a pose consciously modeled on Albrecht Dürer's (1471–1528) self-portrait executed in 1500 (Munich, Alte Pinakothek).[2] Kohno Michisei gazes confidently at the viewer. All features of the painting underscore realistic rather than idealistic representation. The corrective power of the right lens of his spectacles magnifies his weak eye, and his joined hands hold a tattered painter's glove. A fur-collared coat clasped with metal chain is worn over his kimono, with undershirt visible at the neck and sleeves. Oak leaf clusters are positioned at either side of the artist's head and seem to mimic the compositional asymmetry found in the Dürer portrait where inscribed text rather than leaves fills those spaces. The emotional distance achieved by the traditional three-quarter portrait pose is eschewed for the immediacy of a frontal view. Michisei's image is engaged rather than observed. The twenty-two-year-old Michisei envelopes his precisely rendered ordinariness within a larger Rennaissance quotation, one in which Dürer suggests a Christic identification.[3]

Michisei completed several other self-portraits during this period. In contrast with the portrait seen here, they are more impressionistic than finely detailed. Interestingly, the artist's hair in all other portraits and sketches, if not covered by a hat, is rendered as unkempt and tousled. The groomed and composed visage in this portrait is the exception.[4]

Michisei was raised in a creatively eccentric atmosphere. His father Jirō (1856–1934) was an artist of some accomplishment having studied under the distinguished Tasaki Sōun (1815–1898), a painter in the *nanga*, or literati, style for the Ashikaga daimyo who ruled from the castle town of Shimotsuke in present-day Tochigi Prefecture to the north of Tokyo. Later, he was accepted as a student by Takahashi Yuichi (1828–1894), a pioneer in the development of Western–style oil painting in Japan. Jirō established himself as a studio photographer in Nagano City (Nagano Prefecture). His home and studio were filled with paintings in the Western style learned from Yuichi and with reproductions of famous images from the canon of Western art — hence Michisei's encounter with Dürer and other Renaissance artists — and Western books were often ordered through Maruzen, the major Tokyo book purveyor.[5] In 1904, the year marked by the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, Jirō was received into the Russian Orthodox church. This was a commitment of considerable social consequence for the Kohno family.[6] Beyond choosing association with the legal but still suspect Christian religion, the decision raised questions of patriotism. He worshiped in the small Nagano church, which was located adjacent to the imposing and ancient Buddhist temple of Zenkōji. In later years, Michisei recalled being taunted with the name Yasunoko (Jesus child).[7] Michisei's exposure to religious icons prominent in the Orthodox liturgy, as well as an early and intimate acquaintance with forms of expression ranging from portrait photography and to examples of sixteenth-century Western realism, are clearly evident in this 1917 self-portrait. The inherently reflective and confident individualism underlying his multiple efforts at self-portraiture perhaps reflects a perspective nurtured in an atmosphere of strongly held minority opinions.

Michisei represented Japan's third generation of Western–style painters; his father's teacher Takahashi Yuichi was in the vanguard. Artists of this period were much indebted to Japan's Ministry of Education, which had played a critical role in the revival and promotion of contemporary Japanese art and craft since the first years of the Meiji government (1868–1912). However, in 1917, when Michisei entered this portrait in the eleventh annual Ministry-sponsored Bunten, a national exhibition, the ministry's implicit policy of arbitration of taste through a system of juried exhibitions, awards, and commissions was under challenge. By the turn of the century splinter leagues and associations of artists asserted their independence from a government-defined "academy." In the early twentieth century, Japanese artists lived in and traveled through Europe. They returned to Japan to convey the ferment within the European art movements. Impressionism, postimpressionism, cubism, and fauvism were widely discussed and explored, most prominently in the avant-garde literary journal *Shirakaba* (White birch) founded in 1910.

In 1915, while visiting Tokyo, Michisei met Kishida Ryūsei (1891–1929). Michisei's senior by only a few years, Ryūsei was already a figure of note in progressive painting circles. The son of the distinguished journalist Kishida Ginkō (1833–1905), Ryūsei explored a range of European and Japanese painting styles. He was impressed with Michisei's painting ability and forthright articulation of opinions. Their friendship continued through the rest of Ryūsei's short life. At the time of their first meeting and for several years following, Ryūsei was also deeply attracted to the portrait painting styles of the Northern Renaissance. It was during this period that Ryūsei's portraits of his daughter, Reiko, were created. These paintings, featuring Reiko at various ages in her childhood, all demonstrably evoke notions of Renaissance models. Of these portraits, the 1921 rendering of a demure and enigmatically smiling girl covered by a knitted shawl has perhaps become the most recognizable painting of the Taishō era (1912–26). The attempt to fuse the ideals of Western humanism with Japanese sensibilities in the Reiko series, as well as in Michisei's similar efforts in his self-portraits, are perhaps emblematic of the political and cultural aspirations of that era.

Interestingly, a portrait sketch of Michisei by Ryūsei dates to 1922 and is notable for the same oddly disproportionate rendering of diminutive body and large head seen in the Reiko portraits.[8]

In 1917, the year of his debut at the Bunten, Michisei moved from Nagano to the Zoshigaya area of Tokyo. He continued to paint but supported himself primarily as an illustrator for newspaper and book publishers. Michisei also wrote extensively. His published articles treat theory, art history, as well as reflections on the seminal role of his friend, Kishida Ryūsei, in the art movements of the Taishō era.[9]

Kohno Michisei's distinctive and powerful portraits have only recently become known in the West.[10] A careful evaluation of his relationship with Ryūsei and his circle will likely suggest that his influence on the theory and practice of portrait painting, in a era entranced with unfamiliar notions of individualism, was more profound than previously thought.

In recent years, the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery has been actively collecting to form a discrete body of Japanese prints and paintings dating from the late nineteenth century to the present. The addition of the Kohno Michisei self-portrait provides one of the definitive Japanese works of the early twentieth century, appropriately a painting about identity and the assimilation of the unfamiliar.

James T. Ulak

PUBLISHED

Shajitsu Keifu ni Taishō ki no sainitsu byōsha (An eye for minute details: Realistic paintings in the Taishō period) (Tokyo: National Museum of Modern Art, 1986), pp. 29, 97.

NOTES

1. *Shajitsu Keifu ni Taishō ki no sainitsu byōsha* (An eye for minute details: Realistic paintings in the Taishō period) (Tokyo: National Museum of Modern Art, 1986). This catalogue contains a number of excellent portraiture examples from the Taishō era.

2. Doris Croissant et al., *Japan und Europa* (Berlin: Argon, 1993), pp. 555–56. A 1919 self-portrait from the collection of the Yokohama Museum was shown at this exhibition.

3. Erwin Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1955), p. 43. See also David Strieder, "Dürer, Albrecht," in *The Dictionary of Art*, ed. Jane Turner, vol. 9 (New York: Macmillian, 1996), p. 432.

4. *Taishō rearizumu no kisai: Kohno Michisei to sono shūhen* (The prodigy of Taishō realism: Kohno Michisei and his circle), (Nagano: Nagano ken Shinano Bijutsu kan, 1994), pp. 24–25. Included here are images from the collections of the Yokohama Museum of Art and the Shinano Museum of Art.

5. *Shajitsu Keifu ni Taishō ki no sainitsu byōsha*, p. 95.

6. *Seishun: Kohno Michsei ten* (Youth: Kohno Michisei exhibition) (Tokyo: Shinobazu Garō, 1982), p. 5.

7. This information is taken from conversations with the artist's son, Kohno Shuntatsu, May 1998.

8. *Taishō rearizumu no kisai*, p. 51.

9. Ibid., pp. 93–94.

10. Croissant, *Japan und Europa*, pp. 555–56.

Bizen jar

Fujiwara Kei (1899–1983)
Japan, Okayama Prefecture, Imbe,
ca. 1955–65
Stoneware with natural ash glaze
Height 24.9, diameter 23.9 cm
s1997.45

Fujiwara Kei was born into a farming family in Okayama Prefecture that had no association with the famous local product, Bizen pottery, a ware cherished by Japanese collectors and tea masters for the rich coloration of its unglazed stoneware surfaces. After graduating from the prestigious Shizutani Middle School, founded by the Okayama domain in the seventeenth century, Fujiwara enrolled in the literature department of Waseda University in 1921. He stayed on in Tokyo to pursue a literary career, publishing two books of verse and also becoming involved in the socialist movement.[1] In 1937, however, realizing that he did not have the talent to succeed in literature, he returned home. By that time pottery production in Bizen, which had long stagnated around the production of ornamental figures *(okimono)*, had begun a radical transformation through the technical research and creative work of Kaneshige Tōyō (1896–1967), who returned for his models to the famed Bizen tea wares of the Momoyama period (1573–1615) and investigated clay sources, kiln structures, and firing procedures in order to re-create the colors and textures of classic Bizen tea wares.

In 1938, at the urging of his literary acquaintances, Fujiwara Kei turned to pottery, studying first with Mitsumura Baikei, then with Kaneshige in 1941. In contrast to Kaneshige's focus on Momoyama period tea wares, Fujiwara took as his models the older, simpler products of the Muromachi period (1333–1573), when the Bizen kilns made jars and basins for kitchen and farming use. Fujiwara's work is typified by thick bodies, simple contours, and unobtrusive coloration of smooth surfaces, as shown by this jar with its gentle transition from shoulder to neck and its thickly rounded rim. Such jar forms are highly characteristic of his work, and he made them often.[2]

In 1957 Fujiwara Kei was named an Intangible Cultural Property of Okayama Prefecture; in 1970 he was designated an Intangible Cultural Property (Living National Treasure). (Kaneshige Tōyō was the first Bizen potter to receive the honor, in 1956, the second year of the awards.) A private museum of Fujiwara's work opened in Bizen in 1977. His eldest son Yū (born 1932) was designated a Living National Treasure a few years ago.

This jar was acquired from the artist by Kawashima Riichirō (1886–1971), a close friend of Sanae Reeves's father and the husband of his sister. Kawashima, a Western-style painter, served as a judge for the annual Bunten and Nitten exhibitions.

The jar is contained in a paulownia-wood box inscribed and signed by the artist. The inscription on the top of the lid reads: (upper right) *Bizen no tsubo* [Bizen jar], (lower left) *Kei* [square red seal: Kei].

Louise Cort

NOTES

1. Obituary of Fujiwara Kei, *Asahi Shimbun*, November 12, 1983.

2. For biographical data and major examples of Fujiwara's work, see Yoshida Kōzō, ed., *Gendai no tōgei*, vol. 7 (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1976), works by the artist, dated from 1943 to 1974 (pp. 17–40), including a large jar (height 33.5 cm) dated 1972; biographical essay (pp. 132–41); chronology (pp. 142–44); photographs of the artist (back, no page number); and Hayashiya Seizō, ed., *Nihon no toji gendai hen*, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1992), annotated plates of the artist's work (pp. 114–26), including a jar similar to this one, dated 1972 (height 33.3 cm) belonging to the Fujiwara Kei Kinenkan (plate 2); biographical essay (pp. 238–39); chronology (pp. 240–41). Fujiwara Kei's work was not included in the 1993 Japan Society exhibition *Modern Japanese Ceramics in American Collections*, which suggests that it is not well represented in collections here.

Irabo tea bowl

Kusube Yaichi (1897–1984)
Japan, Kyoto, ca. 1955–65
Stoneware with Irabo glaze
Height. 6.9, diameter 14.9 cm
S1997.46

Kusube Yaichi was one of the leading Kyoto ceramic artists of the mid-twentieth century. He was born into a family of pottery exporters in Kyoto and studied at the Kyoto Ceramics Research Institute from 1912 to 1915. In 1920, with five peers, he founded the innovative artists' group Sekidōsha (Red Earth Group), with which he exhibited for several years. His work was purchased for the first time by the Imperial Household Agency in 1926. After a crafts division was incorporated into the annual government-sponsored Teiten exhibition in 1927, Kusube's work was accepted regularly for that exhibition, and in 1933 he became an invited participant. In that setting he consistently showed vases or jars. He continued to participate in later versions of the exhibition, the Bunten (1937–39, 1941–44) and the Nitten (1945–47 and 1949 onward), until the year of his death, and he also served as judge.

In 1952 Kusube received the Japan Art Academy prize, and ten years later he was nominated to membership in the academy. In 1971 a major retrospective of Kusube's work, selected by the artist, was held in Tokyo and Osaka. Another definitive exhibition, held in Tokyo and Osaka in 1974, consisted of just two vases, both decorated with his distinctive and extremely difficult technique using colored slip.[1] In 1975 a vase using that technique was presented by Ise Shrine to Queen Elizabeth II.[2] Altogether his work was included in more than sixty domestic and eleven government-sponsored overseas exhibitions.[3]

Kusube's most distinctive work in his mature years used flower and fruit motifs rendered with pastel-colored slips painted onto porcelain, reflecting the coloration and subject matter of the painting style known as Nihonga. Typical of well-trained Kyoto potters, however, he also was comfortable using a range of traditional Chinese, Korean, and Japanese ceramic styles, and such work constituted his "bread-and-butter" production as contrasted to his exhibition pieces. This tea bowl, for instance, is based upon the type of Korean bowl known as Irabo.[4] Such bowls were made in Korea in the early seventeenth century largely for export to Japan, and they were characterized by a coarse-grained, dark clay body and thin mustard- or khaki-colored glaze.[5] The Irabo glaze became a staple in the repertoire of Kyoto potters. It is made from a compound of common ash, ocher clay, limestone, and porcelain clay and is fired in oxidation.[6]

This bowl was acquired from the artist by Kawashima Riichirō (1886–1971), a close friend of Sanae Reeves's father and the husband of his sister. Kawashima, a Western-style painter, served as judge for the annual Bunten and Nitten exhibitions, where he may have made Kusube's acquaintance.

The bowl is contained in a paulownia-wood box that is inscribed and signed by the artist. The inscription on the front of the box lid reads: (upper right) *Irabo/chawan* [Irabo tea bowl]; (lower left) *Yaichi saku* [made by Yaichi] [square red seal: Natsuyama].

Louise Cort

NOTES

1. Nakagawa Chisaku, ed., *Gendai no tōgei*, vol. 5 (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1975), plates 2–5.

2. Ibid., p. 147.

3. For biographical data and major examples of Kusube's work, see ibid., color plates of thirty-six pieces by Yaichi, dating 1920–974 (pp. 17–47); biographical essay and chronology (pp. 132–49); photographs of the artist (back, no page number); Hayashiya Seizō, ed., *Nihon no tōji gendai hen*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1992), annotated photographs of the artist's work (pp. 146–64), biographical essay (pp. 237–41), chronology (pp. 242–43); Inui Yoshiaki and Matsubara Ryūichi, *A Retrospective: Ceramic Works of Kusube Yaichi — The Seventy Years of Brilliance* (Tokyo: Mainichi Newspapers, 1997).

For examples of Kusube's work in American collections, see Frederick Baekeland and Robert Moes, *Modern Japanese Ceramics in American Collections* (New York: Japan Society, 1993). Number 104 in this catalogue is an iron-glazed, peach-shaped sculpture, from 1953, in the Conant collection, New York. The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, is also said to own a Kusube piece (p. 192). According to Baekeland, Kusube's work became so expensive as a result of its great popularity in Japan that "major examples of it were never collected in the United States" (p. 174).

4. Other Irabo tea bowls made by Kusube in the early 1960s are illustrated in Inui and Matsubara, *Retrospective*, nos. 68, 82.

5. The Freer collection includes a Korean Irabo-type bowl, F97.63, as well as a Japanese version of an Irabo-type bowl dating to the Edo period (1615–1868), F11.376.

6. Herbert H. Sanders, *The World of Japanese Ceramics* (Tokyo and New York: Kodansha International, 1967), p. 238.

GIFT OF SANAE AND DOUGLAS REEVES
ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY
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Vase with crackled ice glaze

Kiyomizu Rokubei VI (1901–1980)
Japan, Kyoto, ca. 1955–65
Glazed stoneware
Height 24.6, width 8.9, depth 8.9 cm
S1997.47

Kiyomizu Rokubei VI was born in a distinguished family of Kyoto potters. In 1923 he graduated from the Kyoto Municipal Art College with a specialty in painting. He then studied ceramics with his father, Rokubei V (Rokuwa). His work was accepted in the Teiten annual exhibition in 1927, the first year that the exhibition included a division for crafts. Beginning in 1931 he was invited to exhibit his work, and in 1939 he became a member of the judges' committee for that exhibition, thereafter serving as a judge for the successive incarnations of the exhibition, the Bunten and the Nitten. He was also a director of the Nitten exhibition. In 1945 he assumed the studio name Rokubei VI when he succeeded as head of his family studio. He received the prize of the Nihon Geijitsuin in 1955, and seven years later, in 1962, he became a member of the Japan Art Academy.

Rokubei's characteristic mature work draws upon his training as a Kyoto painter, using overglaze enamel decoration evocative of Rimpa, the Kyoto-based artistic style that drew on courtly imagery. His work of the 1960s, however, also showed diverse interests, ranging from monochrome glazes on sleek modern forms to Tang-style, three-color lead glazes. This vase exemplifies his personal interpretation of a Chinese crackled celadon glaze, one of the basic glazes in the repertoire of most major Kyoto workshops but interpreted differently by each. The glaze was applied in two layers to cultivate a subtly pitted and fissured surface, and its muted color is designed to play a subordinate role to that of the flower it contains.[1]

This vase was acquired from the artist by Kawashima Riichirō (1886–1971), a close friend of Sanae Reeves's father as well as the husband of his sister. A Western-style painter, Kawashima, like Kiyomizu, served as a judge for the annual Bunten and Nitten exhibitions.

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The vase is contained in a paulownia-wood box inscribed by the artist. The inscription on the front of the box lid reads: (upper right) *hyōretsu yū* [crackled ice glaze]; (center) *kabin* [vase]; (lower left) *Rokubei* [hexagonal black seal: *sei* or *kiyo*]. The Chinese character used for "glaze" is an uncommon one favored by Rokubei and may be said to typify the Chinese-flavored special names chosen by Nitten artists who continued in the line of the erudite Tokyo potter Itaya Hazan (1872–1963).[2]

Louise Cort

NOTES

1. For biographical information and examples of the artist's major work, see Nakagawa Chisaku, ed., *Gendai no tōgei,* vol. 5 (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1975), thirty-nine pieces by the artist, dating from 1927 to 1974 (pp. 99–128), biographical essay and chronology (pp. 178–91); photographs of the artist (back, no page number); and Hayashiya Seizō, ed., *Nihon no tōji gendai hen,* vol. 1 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1992), annotated plates of the artist's work (pp. 184–96), including a vase with crackled celadon glaze, dated 1965, in the Kyoto Fūritsu Sōgō Shiryōkan (plate 10); biographical essay and chronology (pp. 250–55).

2. Hayashiya, ed., *Nihon no tōji gendai hen,* pp. 251-52.

Set of five Kutani-ware dishes

Kitade Tōjirō (1898–1968)
Japan, Ishikawa Prefecture, Kanazawa,
ca. 1955–65
Porcelain with overglaze enamels
Height 2.5, diameter 16.2 cm
S1997.48.1–.5

S1997.48.3

Kitade Tōjirō was one of the foremost modern exponents of overglaze enamel decoration on porcelain associated with the Kutani style of Ishikawa Prefecture. The Kutani "style" as it originated in the mid-seventeenth century actually includes at least two distinct variants, one completely disguising the porcelain surface with thick enamels in dark green, purple, and yellow (termed the "blue-green type" *[aode]*), and another using those enamels, plus red, more sparingly against the white porcelain ground. In both versions, pictorial motifs typically form the centerpiece against a ground and framework of geometric patterns. Recent archaeology has shown that the production of porcelain bearing Kutani-style decoration is closely associated with kilns in Arita rather than those in the Ishikawa village of Kutani.[1] The efforts of Ishikawa potters to "revive" the Kutani style in the nineteenth century, however, suggest a deep and as yet incompletely understood association of the older ware with the Maeda house, the warrior family that ruled the region. In the Meiji era (1868–1912) Ishikawa workshops produced quantities of Western tableware decorated in a red-and-gold variant of the "Kutani style."[2]

In this century various ceramic artists based in Ishikawa Prefecture have rethought the use of enamel decoration. Frederick Baekeland cites Kitade Tōjirō and Kitade Fujio (1919–1937) as Kutani artists who gave the ware a "modern abstract twist."[3] The next two generations of Ishikawa ceramicists are well represented in a group of thirty contemporary porcelain vessels given to the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery by the Japan Foundation in 1993 (S1993.9–38). Many use the enamel glazes solely for their colors, arranged in abstract or geometric patterns.

Kitade Tōjirō was adopted in 1922 by a family that operated a workshop that produced the porcelain bodies for Kutani ware. At the urging of Nihonga painter Yano Kyoson, he studied painting at the Osaka College of Art, submitting his first pieces to exhibitions while he was still a student. His meeting with porcelain artist Tomimoto Kenkichi (1886–1963) in 1936 determined his direction as a potter. Tomimoto's experimental work at the Kitade kiln inspired Kitade to explore new directions in Kutani-style overglaze enamel decoration. Kitade's designs for porcelain, based on sketches from nature, became increasingly painterly over time. In 1956 he began teaching at the Kanazawa College of Art, where he profoundly influenced the next generation of Kutani artists. He held annual one-person exhibitions at the Wakō Department Store in Tokyo, beginning in 1938. Starting in 1932, he regularly participated in the Teiten exhibition and its later incarnations, the Bunten and the Nitten, and he eventually served as a judge.[4]

This set of dishes was acquired from the artist by Kawashima Riichirō (1886–1971), a Western-style painter who also served as a judge for the Bunten and Nitten exhibitions. The dishes are contained in a paulownia-wood box inscribed by the artist.

Louise Cort

NOTES

1. Archaeological evidence for production of the seventeenth-century Kutani style is presented in *Exhibition of Imari and Ko-Kutani Ware* (Ishikawa and Arita: Ishikawa Prefectural Museum of Art and Kyushu Ceramic Museum, 1987).

2. Kutani wares of the nineteenth century are discussed in Sensaku Nakagawa, *Kutani Ware*, Japanese Arts Library (Tokyo: Kodansha International and Shibundo, 1974), chap. 2.

3. Frederick Baekeland and Robert Moes, *Modern Japanese Ceramics in American Collections* (New York: Japan Society, 1993), p. 169.

4. For biographical information and examples of the artist's major work, see Tokyo Kokuritsu Kindai Bijitsukan, ed., *Kindai Nihon no iroe jiki* (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1979), and Nakagawa Chisaku, ed., *Gendai no tōgei*, vol. 9 (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1976). *Modern Japanese Ceramics in American Collections* by Baekeland and Moes does not list any work by Kitade Tōjirō in American collections.

GIFT OF SANAE AND DOUGLAS REEVES
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Clay Image: Cellist (Deizō: Serohiki)

Suzuki Osamu (born 1926)
Japan, Kyoto, 1987
Stoneware with slip and ash glaze
Height 42.3, width 31.0, depth 19.2 cm
S1997.32

In the impoverished and chaotic years immediately following the end of the Second World War, five young Kyoto potters joined in a gesture of optimism, founding a group they named Sōdeisha, "Flowing Mud Society," after an expression taken from a Chinese Qing dynasty (1644–1911) treatise on ceramics.[1] The self-consciously arcane name evoked clay in its sticky, protean form of mud or mire, while the founders' statement in July 1948 declared that their goal in joining together was not "to free ourselves from personal confusion" but to harness the energy generated by interaction "as a means of discerning our own features."[2] Suzuki Osamu, creator of *Clay Image: Cellist*, was one of the founding members of the group, together with Yagi Kazuo (1918–1979) and Yamada Hikaru (born 1924), in addition to two others who resigned the following year. In 1948 Suzuki was twenty-one years old; his entire career has developed in tandem with the evolution of the Sōdeisha group, and he is now among the most widely recognized of Japan's ceramic sculptors.

Sōdeisha was the most radical of the new societies founded after the war within the highly stratified world of professional ceramics in Kyoto. Like the New Craftsmen Society organized in 1946 by Tomimoto Kenkichi (1886–1963) and the Shikōkai group established in 1947 by Uno Sango (born 1902), the Sōdeisha founders reacted strongly against the oppressive weight of the official government salon, the Nitten exhibition, which was revived in 1946. They saw an opportunity to stand in opposition to established taste and to strike out in a new direction. Unlike the other new groups, however, which explored innovation within a traditional context of function, Sōdeisha consciously sought to rend the age-old relationship between ceramic form and function in order to focus on clay as an expressive sculptural medium. This stance was strongly inspired by sudden access, following the wartime blackout, to information about international art movements and to the work of Pablo Picasso and Paul Klee, among others. But, as critic Inui Yoshiaki has pointed out, the goal of Sōdeisha members — all raised in Kyoto and educated as skilled potters — was not just to translate the forms or concepts of contemporary abstract sculpture into clay but to pursue, in Yagi's words, "the thought — or more properly speaking — the *act* of making a more direct and intimate connection between the process of ceramics and one's own spirit."[3]

In September 1948, the first Sōdeisha group exhibition took place in Osaka; thereafter, annual exhibitions were held in both Kyoto and Tokyo. It was not until 1980, however, that the trend initiated by Sōdeisha was validated in a wider context. The 1980 exhibition *Clay Work: From Pottery to Sculpture* held at Seibu Department Store, Otsu City, assigned a leading role to postwar avant-garde sculptors of nonfunctional ceramic objects, including Suzuki and other Sōdeisha members.[4]

Suzuki, as son of a wheel-throwing specialist in one of the prominent Kyoto ceramic studios, studied ceramics at the Kyoto Second Industrial School, graduating in 1943. He quickly received international recognition, beginning with inclusion in a 1950 exhibition of contemporary Japanese ceramics at the Musée Cernuschi, Paris. His work won the gold medal at the 1962 Prague international ceramics exhibition and was introduced to the United States in the First Japan Art Festival, 1966.[5] During the 1950s and early 1960s Suzuki experimented with several formats, including drawing into white clay slip applied over a stoneware base. Like other Sōdeisha artists, he titled all his works, and he ordered them in series. In 1960, he began producing figural sculptures that he named *dogū* after the ritual clay figurines of late Neolithic Jomon culture in Japan. These gave way, by 1962, to the long-lived series *deizō* (clay image), to which *Cellist* belongs. The images in this ongoing series, which uses the same character for "mud" as Sōdeisha, are evocative of the clay sculptures of humans and animals (*haniwa*) placed on top of Japanese burial mounds of the third — sixth centuries.[6] Thus, while concerning himself with issues of abstract form, Suzuki also made an overt connection to the most ancient Japanese prototypes for figurative sculpture.

The materials of Suzuki's sculptures also reveal intentional ties to long-standing ceramic formats deeply familiar to his Japanese audience. The surface of *Clay Image: Cellist* resembles unglazed stoneware, but the effect is carefully cultivated with graded tonalities of thin, red-brown slip veiled by a thin gloss of ash glaze. This surface evokes the gritty texture and warm russet tones of medieval stoneware jars from the Shigaraki kilns, southeast of Kyoto, esteemed by practitioners of the Japanese tea ceremony (*chanoyu*) from circa 1500 onward. There is material truth in this analogy, since clay mined in Shigaraki has been a mainstay of Kyoto pottery workshops since the seventeenth century. Suzuki uses coils of a Shigaraki-based clay body to build his forms by hand, smoothing the surface but stopping short of obscuring the deepest irregularities, which remain as a random patterning of indentations whose edges catch the light where whitish clay shows through the red coating. This conscious yet subtle evocation of historical Japanese ceramic formats marks Suzuki's work, whatever its avant-garde dimension, as firmly based within the established Kyoto approach to ceramics, which values ringing the changes on a known glaze or form over total departure from familiar materials. Yet Suzuki's choice of title, with its reference to the European musical instrument, draws this sculpture into the international context of postwar Japanese culture.

Around 1970 Suzuki embarked on another series, using porcelain clay with cool, translucent bluish glaze modeled after Chinese *qingbai* porcelain of the Song dynasty (960–1279). These forms make use of the technical vocabulary of traditional mass-produced porcelain, using multipart molds with the irregular seams left intact and stamping or otherwise patterning the surface. Their ornamental quality stands in contrast to the monumental simplicity of

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the *deizō* forms, which have grown increasingly abstract and minimal over time, as earlier complex, high-relief shapes have been replaced by frontally oriented forms marked by decisive outline and minimal surface embellishment, exemplified in *Cellist*.

In his steadfast pursuit of variations within these two strictly limited frameworks, Suzuki has sought depth and nuance rather than superficial variety. In this sense he is akin to the classic Raku pottery workshop in Kyoto, where fifteen generations of potters over four centuries have pursued the variations on the theme of a single vessel form, the tea bowl. Suzuki's progression toward simplicity has been characterized by a Western writer as "less compelling and more perfunctory,"[7] but Japanese critics respond warmly to the "expansive power flowing outward from [the] interior"[8] of his extremely simplified form. Suzuki's work is already held in six Western public collections as well. The addition of this piece to the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery collection strengthens representation of nontraditional directions in postwar Japanese ceramics.

Louise Cort

NOTES

1. The formation of Sōdeisha is discussed in Alexandra Monroe, *Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1994), pp. 132–33. See also Nakanodō Kazunobu, "The Passage Toward the Creation of Objects—with the Sōdeisha as the Central Theme," in *Forms in Aggression: Formative Uprising of the 1960s* (Tokyo: Crafts Gallery, National Museum of Modern Art, 1987), pp. 38–44.

2. Yagi Kazuo, "30 shūnen ni saishite" (On the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary), in *Sōdeisha 30 shūnen kinenten sakuhinshū* (Catalogue of works in the Sōdeisha thirtieth anniversary exhibition), (Kyoto: Sōdeisha, [1977]), not paginated.

3. Quoted in Inui Yoshiaki, "Shiteki Sōdeisha ron" (A personal theory of Sōdeisha), in ibid.

4. Nakanodō Kazunobu, "Japanese Public Collections of Modern Ceramics and Their Direction: From a Museum Curator's Viewpoint," in Frederick Baekeland and Robert Moes, *Modern Japanese Ceramics in American Collections* (New York: Japan Society, 1993), p. 65.

5. *The 1st Japan Art Festival* (Tokyo: Japan Art Festival Association, 1966), p. 58. Also *Gendai no tōgei* (Modern ceramics), vol. 12 (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1975), plate 20, Kyoto National Museum of Modern Art collection.

6. Both *dogū* and *haniwa* are illustrated in Richard Pearson, *Ancient Japan* (Washington, D.C. and New York: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan, Tokyo, 1992).

7. Frederick Baekeland, in *Modern Japanese Ceramics in American Collections*, p. 185.

8. Inui Yoshiaki, in *The Now in Japanese Ceramics—Messages from Artists in Kyoto* (Tokyo: Takashimaya Department Store, 1990), p. 28.

New Waves Series/Malibu Woman

Masami Teraoka (born 1936)
United States, 1992
Watercolor on paper
104.1 x 74.9 cm
S1997.29

Masami Teraoka, a Japanese-born resident of Hawaii, has taken as his artistic manifesto the creation of an art form that unites Japanese and Western painting styles into hybrid images that offer satiric commentary on current social issues. Teraoka combines the imagery and conventions of the nineteenth-century Japanese woodblock print with bold, cartoon-inspired figural representations of the pop art movement. Images populated by Caucasians in Pacific coastal settings are overlayed with the stylized Japanese calligraphy of the Kabuki playbill. The artist signs his works in the fashion of Utagawa Kunisada (1786–1865), a master print designer whose many works are often quoted in Teraoka paintings. Teraoka frames his signature, "Teraoka Masami ga," in the red lozenge cartouche form favored by Kunisada.

Images in the New Waves series, of which *Malibu Woman* is one, are found mainly in Hawaii or on other Pacific beaches. Seen from the perspective of Teraoka's current work, the series marks a transitional period in Teraoka's subject matter and style. His international debut, *Masami Teraoka,* held in 1979 at the Whitney Museum of American Art, offered a body of works that established the trademark Teraoka style: wry observations of the awkward interactions between Western and Japanese cultures. Nineteenth-century courtesans, elegantly coiffed and robed, munch on McDonald's burgers or, in stately promenade, find the modern detritus, hamburger wrappers, clinging to their lacquered clogs. Japanese businessmen in search of international currencies, brash and overbearing, pollute the nature that their traditional culture professes to love. Teraoka equates their fate with the prehistoric creatures lost in the LaBrea Tar Pits. Teraoka's work in the late 1970s and early 1980s thrived on the visual pun and the sardonic humor of visual incongruities provided by oddly juxtaposed cultural artifacts.

A decade later, using largely the same conventions, Teraoka's *Waves and Plagues* exhibition (Contemporary Museum, Honolulu) examined the meaning of the AIDS epidemic, often through images that placed the contemporary plague anachronistically in the settings of nineteenth-century Japanese brothels. With the *Paintings by Masami Teraoka* exhibition (Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington, D.C., 1996) the artist introduced a new metaphor, Adam and Eve, the first couple of Western civilization, in images that show them confounded by the perils of computer technology and suffering the consequences of confusing information with knowledge. The paintings retain some traces of the artist's earlier Japanese paraphernalia, but the primary visual source has shifted to Northern European Renaissance art.

Chronologically, the New Waves series follows the lengthy examination of AIDS and precedes the gradual absorption of Western source models and metaphors. The series is set largely in Hawaii, the artist's residence and symbolic halfway point between Japan and the United States. Works in the series find the artist in an oasis of reflection. Observing Japanese tourists in Hawaii, Teraoka mounts a hilarious critique of the Japanese as crude, inept, antiquated, and parochial in the face of Western culture. He participates in the images but distances himself from his culture of birth by assuming the symbolic identity of a catfish — racially neutral — in love with a beautiful Caucasian woman. The woman spurns Japanese suitors in favor of her fish-lover. It is in this series of images that Teraoka establishes his international identity and the right to move beyond bipolar satire to engage social and metaphysical issues of the West.

Malibu Woman features a pensive, perhaps calculating blond beach-goer tearing open a condom wrapper with her teeth. The large Japanese ideograms at the right of the painting express her thoughts: "My boyfriend doesn't like to use condoms." The image suggests more than the mundane issue of a couple negotiating a protocol of sexual hygiene. The bold and troubled face of the young woman announces a developing Teraoka theme: the conflict of pleasure and reason. It is from this new visual base camp that Teraoka will turn to Western religious thought and mythology to examine questions of free will, knowledge and death. *Malibu Woman* stands as a pivotal image in the artist's visual pilgrimage from clever satire to profound questioning.[1]

Teraoka's art is widely represented in institutional and private collections in the United States. Three museums within the Smithsonian Institution — the National Museum of American Art, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery — have important Teraoka works in their respective collections. The acquisition of *Malibu Woman* is a dramatic instance of the Sackler's commitment to enhancing its collection with significant contemporary Asian perspectives and, in particular, with art that reveals the interplay between Asian visual cultures and the West, whether through use of technique or theme. The Sackler's growing collection of twentieth-century prints and photographs now embraces painting and the playful but troubling vision of Masami Teraoka.

James T. Ulak

PUBLISHED
James T. Ulak et al., *Paintings by Masami Teraoka* (New York: Weatherhill, 1996), p. 81.

NOTE
1. James T. Ulak et al., *Paintings by Masami Teraoka* (New York: Weatherhill, 1996). See the essays by Ulak (pp. 11–31), Alexandra Munroe (pp. 33–49), and Masami Teraoka with Lynda Hess (pp. 50–55).

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まるみ西

No. 5

Takiguchi Kazuo (born 1953)
Japan, Kyoto, 1996
Glazed stoneware
Height 22.6, width 27.0, length 41.7 cm
s1997.33

Although the Sōdeisha group, founded in 1948, established a domain for sculptural ceramics in Japan (see s1997.32), it was only in the late 1970s that such work moved to center stage in the Japanese art world. Sōdeisha was founded by a group of Kyoto potters in their twenties. In the 1980s, clay's potential as a medium for abstract sculpture developed further in the hands of another group of young artists in their twenties — in experiential terms, two generations younger than the Sōdeisha founders and successor to the generation of potters born in the late 1930s. The maker of this sculpture, Kyoto ceramic artist Takiguchi Kazuo (born 1953), has been an outstanding figure in this so-called third generation of postwar ceramic artists. Nakanodō Kazunobu has characterized this generation as working "unencumbered by organizational affiliations" and sharing a "tendency to exclude both traditional Japanese formal elements and decorative subtlety and vagueness, instead giving priority to carefully thought out creative ideas."[1] These artists exhibit in one-person shows in the galleries that have sprung up during the same period; their works find an audience among the municipal and prefectural museums that have been built in the same era, creating a new realm of public spaces within which ceramic sculpture finds an appropriate locale.

This sculpture, bearing the austere title (or antititle) *No. 5*, referring to its order in the list of pieces for Takiguchi's first one-person exhibition in the United States, continues the technique that Takiguchi has cultivated since 1984 and expands upon its theoretical implications. The basis is a clay slab that he presses by hand from a ball of clay into an even thickness of about five millimeters. Takiguchi tailors his sculptures from this single slab that he "wraps around air," trimming excess and smoothing away all traces of fabrication. To achieve the desired rounded contour, he has taken to draping the slab over a mold and gathering the form in a downward motion. With the discovery of the single-slab technique, replacing his earlier use of the more commonplace method of piecing multiple slabs to make containers, he has moved from open to increasingly closed forms, calling into question the object's role as vessel and gradually ridding it of all "vestiges of function." Rather than imposing a predetemined shape, he describes coaching forth the unanticipated forms that emerge through this process of manipulating the clay. He terms this interaction with the clay's inherent structure and nature "affinity with substance."[2]

The form of *No. 5*, with its subtle transitions from humped spine to rounded flanks, rests on three pointed feet that barely lift it off the ground. Its minuscule mouth — the opening left around the edges of the sculpted slab — opens on the rising end of the central ridge. Takiguchi has said that this mouth is the smallest yet realized in any of his sculptures and probably the limit of his ability. The surface is coated with iron-bearing slip that, fired in heavy reduction, has turned to a wrinkled gray hide flecked with tiny crystals.

Understandably, Takiguchi has become deeply involved with issues surrounding installation of his work, although he claims that he does so only out of necessity, because most installations leave him unsatisfied. For a 1990 show of ten Kyoto ceramic artists held in the cavernous commercial space of a department store, Takiguchi piled thin vertical slices from the trunks of cedar trees into a roost for five gray-glazed sculptures that are somewhat birdlike in form.[3] In the catalogue essay for that exhibition, ceramic critic and Kyoto University professor Inui Yoshiaki asserted that installation space was not a new issue in Japan but arose from long-standing concerns addressed by performance arts such as the tea ceremony and flower arranging, both associated with Kyoto since their emergence in the sixteenth century.[4] In 1995 Takiguchi linked traditional and modern spatial alternatives by installing a series of pieces successively in three locales: a Japanese garden in Odawara, a private villa in Kyoto, and a modern underground exhibition space in Tokyo.[5] *No. 5* made its debut in the sanctuary of an activist church in downtown Manhattan, where a Kyoto jazz guitarist performed, while the pieces for his April 1998 one-person show, installed in a Shinto shrine in Tokyo, became the setting for a dance performance and poetry reading.

Born into an established Kyoto pottery-making family specializing in fine porcelain tableware, Takiguchi nonetheless studied economics at Dōshisha University before turning to ceramics at the Kyoto University of Fine Arts, although he left both institutions without degrees. His first solo exhibition in Kyoto in 1984 attracted immediate attention, and the next year his entry in the national juried show, *Japan Ceramic Art Exhibition,* won the Foreign Minister's Award. In 1989 he won the grand prize in the same exhibition, and in 1991 he received the New Artist Award from the Gotō Memorial Foundation. Later that year he undertook study at the Royal College of Art, acquiring metalworking and glassmaking skills and producing work for a one-person installation in the rolling fields of north Yorkshire.[6]

Acquisition of *No. 5* strengthens the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery's collection of twentieth-century Japanese ceramics by augmenting the holdings of sculptural forms. Prior to his 1997 New York exhibition, Takiguchi's work was not held by any public collection in North America.

Louise Cort

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PUBLISHED

Louise Allison Cort, "Twentieth-Century Asian Crafts in the Sackler Gallery," *Oriental Art* 43, no. 3 (1997): fig. 2.

NOTES

1. Nakanodō Kazunobu, "Japanese Public Collections of Modern Ceramics and Their Direction: From a Museum Curator's Viewpoint," in Frederick Baekeland and Robert Moes, *Modern Japanese Ceramics in American Collections* (New York: Japan Society, 1993), p. 66.

2. Kaneko Kenji, "Takiguchi Kazuo ron" (Essay on Takiguchi Kazuo), in *Takiguchi Kazuo*, Toh, vol. 53 (Kyoto: Kyoto Shōin, 1992), not paginated.

3. *The Now in Japanese Ceramics — Messages from Artists in Kyoto* (Tokyo: Takashimaya Department Store, 1990).

4. Ibid., p. 7.

5. *A Memory Seen in a Different Light, 1995, Kazuo Takiguchi* (Kyoto: Takiguchi, 1995).

6. Rupert Faulkner, *Japanese Studio Crafts* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1995), p. 59.

Stephen D. Allee, research specialist in Chinese literature and history, attended the Beijing Languages Institute and Nanjing University and also holds a master's degree in Chinese language and literature from the University of Washington. He has provided translations for numerous scholarly articles and publications.

Joseph Chang, associate curator of Chinese art, is a specialist in Chinese painting and calligraphy. Dr. Chang wrote his doctoral dissertation in 1995 at the University of Kansas on a seventeenth-century album, *Large Emerging from Small,* in the National Palace Museum, Taipei. He was the research associate for the Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibition, *Splendors of Imperial China: Treasures from the National Palace Museum,* Taipei (1996).

Louise Cort, curator of ceramics, specializes in historical and contemporary Asian craft traditions, especially ceramics, textiles, and baskets. She is the author of *A Basketmaker in Rural Japan* (1994) and *Seto and Mino Ceramics* (1992).

Vidya Dehejia, associate director and chief curator, has published extensively on the art of south Asia, covering a range of topics from early Buddhist narrative to south Indian bronzes, and from tantric temples to the art of British India. In 1997 Dr. Dehejia published *Indian Art* (1997) for Phaidon Press's new series, Art & Ideas.

Massumeh Farhad, associate curator of Islamic Near Eastern art, received her doctorate from Harvard University in 1987 and joined the staff of the Freer and Sackler Galleries in 1995. A specialist in the arts of the book from the Islamic world, Dr. Farhad was the curator of the exhibition *Art of the Persian Courts: Selections from the Art and History Trust* (1996) and *The Jewel and the Rose: Art for Shah-Jahan* (1997–98).

Ann C. Gunter, associate curator of ancient Near Eastern art, received her doctorate in Classical and Near Eastern art and archaeology from Columbia University in 1980. Dr. Gunter was curator of the exhibition *Preserving Ancient Statues from Jordan* (1996–97) and author of the accompanying interactive program. She is currently completing the manuscript for *Defining Cultural Boundaries: Art and Interaction in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Early First Millennium* B.C.

Thomas Lawton received his doctorate in Chinese art history from Harvard University in 1970. Before retiring in March 1998, he served as curator of Chinese art, assistant director, and director of the Freer Gallery of Art; he was founding director of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery. His publications include *Chinese Figure Painting* (1973); *Chinese Art of the Warring States Period* (1982); and, coauthored with Linda Merrill, *Freer: A Legacy of Art* (1993).

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